

ADULT  
EDUCATION  
FOR  
DEMOCRACY

# ADULT EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY

*by*

HAROLD C. SHEARMAN

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

38A ST. GEORGE'S DRIVE, LONDON, S.W.1

1944

*First published November 1944 by the  
Workers' Educational Association, 38a St. George's Drive, London, S.W.1*

*Printed by the Shenval Press, London and Hertford*

0701  
XX JWS/SHE

## CONTENTS

<i>Ch</i> 1 WHY ADULT EDUCATION?	<i>page</i> 7
2 ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIETY	14
3 PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION	31
4 THE NEEDS OF ADULT EDUCATION	40
5 WAR-TIME EXPERIMENTS	49
6 A POLICY FOR POST-WAR ADULT EDUCATION	56
7 THE PLACE OF THE W.E.A.	76
CONCLUSION	81
APPENDIX	83

## PREFACE

I HAVE written this little book as a contribution to the discussion of adult education which is arousing interest at the present time, and in the belief that the English tradition in adult education is worthy of special attention. That we have much to learn from those countries which have developed on somewhat different lines, has by now come to be a matter of common agreement. That our own capacity for development and fruitful improvisation has been shown again in this as in so many other spheres under stress of war, is also happily true.

As we begin again to turn our minds to the problems of social life in a peace-time world, it cannot be amiss to take stock of our position and ask ourselves what are the fundamental needs in this sphere of a modern democratic society. I have sought to give expression to the belief of those who are convinced that adult education must have as its profoundest motive service to democracy and to those who are striving for its fuller realisation, and that those who are interested in this sector of educational advance must, if they are to avoid disappointment and frustration, be aware of the forces of social change in the life of their time.

Not every reader will agree with the point of view or the distribution of emphasis. I can plead, however, that a sincere attempt has been made to express what I believe has been felt by many of the students in adult education, and that what is said has behind it a considerable experience in this country, and a continuous interest in and observation of other educational systems over a number of years.

My obligations to many past and present colleagues and students in the W.E.A. are far too numerous to be mentioned here. I must, however, mention particularly my colleagues on the Education Advisory Committee, with whom many of these questions have been discussed, though they must not be held responsible for all that I have said. Professor R. H. Tawney, to whose inspiration and insight we are all indebted,

## PREFACE

was kind enough to read the manuscript, and help me with his criticism. Finally, owing to circumstances which have taken me out of the country while the book is in the printer's hands, I am under a special obligation to my friends, Principal J. H. Nicholson, and Ernest Green, the General Secretary of the W.E.A., who have most kindly undertaken to see it through the Press. None of these, of course, is responsible for any of the opinions expressed.

H.C.S.



## *Chapter One*

### WHY ADULT EDUCATION?

**I**N the widespread stirring of ideas and of aspirations after a healthier social order which has been so marked as the war has advanced, a growth of interest in Adult Education has been a most welcome feature. The war itself and the social and international changes which it has brought in its train, has aroused in men's minds urgent interests which have led many to turn to Education for the first time. Others have had Education brought to them, in various forms ranging from C.E.M.A. to the discussion group, both in civilian life and in H.M. Forces. The hope is cherished by those who are concerned about the future of democracy that the wartime expansion will not prove to be ephemeral.

It has too often been assumed that the full-grown man, the active citizen and the busy worker has nothing more to look for from education. There have always been those whose habit it has been, however pressing the burden of affairs, to give some regular time to study. In most ages and places they have been relatively few, but here and there there have been organised systems of adult education, and for the full realisation of democracy it is clearly essential that they shall receive the widest possible extension. New interests develop with experience of life; new problems, both personal and social, challenge the mind; while, on the other hand, the pressure of work and family responsibilities makes it more and more difficult to think freshly, so that new situations tend to be faced with that reliance on instinct and habit which is suggested in the phrase "muddling through."

The working class movement in particular has every reason to lay stress on the importance of education. Its members include very many who have had to struggle against the handicaps imposed by a meagre educational provision. Many of these have left their mark both on their political and social organisations and on local and national government. In order to do so they have had to get knowledge as they could. Many

## WHY ADULT EDUCATION?

of the early trade unionists, co-operators, and chartists accordingly placed working class education in the forefront of their programmes; in the present century the working class movement has developed its own educational agencies and has made good its claim to the service of those already in being.

While much more is done already in the sphere of Adult Education than is often realised, it remains true that development has been less rapid and more patchy than could be wished. Why is this? The answer depends on what we mean by Adult Education and which part of the problem we are considering, since the discussion often seems to be confused.

The educational provision for adults falls at present into two main fields. First, most highly organised, there is the work of the evening institutes and technical and art colleges provided by the Local Education Authorities. Over half a million of the students in these courses are over twenty-one; a large proportion are probably in the early twenties. One-third of the entries are for industrial and professional subjects, while domestic, manual and physical training attract an almost equal proportion. The stimulus is generally practical and the motive often vocational; but there is a fringe of more general studies, and some efforts have been made at an integration of vocational and cultural studies here and there.

Next comes the work promoted by non-official bodies interested in Adult Education, appealing largely to more mature students who bring to their studies experience of life and a desire for enlightenment on social and personal problems. It is carried on largely by the method of discussion. Of the bodies recognised by the Board of Education as "responsible bodies" for providing classes the most important are the Universities and the Workers' Educational Association.

Apart from these there is a wide range of activities, educational in character though often informal and even casual in methods, carried out by social and political organisations entirely outside the national system of education. Often indeed these have the effect of stimulating in their members a desire for more systematic study, and their existence ought not to be ignored in any assessment of the situation.

The degree to which adults will voluntarily devote their time to any of these three fields of activity depends on a number of



## WHY ADULT EDUCATION?

factors, of which the effectiveness of the general educational system and the vigour of social movements are among the most important. On two conditions a great expansion of adult education can be hoped for after the war. The first condition is that the reforms envisaged in the Education Act are carried out, so that young men and women are no longer separated, as they are to-day, by a break of several years, from the habit of regular mental activity. The second is that the nation shall move towards a new and more democratic organisation, political, economic and social, which would put an end to the widespread sense of frustration which undoubtedly damped down the growth of Adult Education before the war.

The scope of Adult Education is as wide as society and as varied as life. It is not a luxury; it is necessary to individual happiness and social well-being. Nor is it limited to any class or section of society. A plea has indeed been made for "adult education for the educated"; and it is essential for themselves and for the common good that those who have been trained for professional careers should have opportunities of broadening and refreshing their intellectual life. Most professional men and women tend to live to too great an extent on past learning, and few are able, as things are, to keep as closely in touch with the developments of their own specialism as could be desired. Changes in the organisation of the health and educational services would help to make this more possible for doctors and teachers, to take two obvious examples. But "adult education for the educated" means more than this. It would be the greatest possible mistake to segregate the 'educated'—or the professional workers, to use a more appropriate term—from other sections of society, except in such 'refresher' courses as are directly concerned with technique and training. What they most need is the opportunity of taking up new studies in a less specialised way in association with others of different training and experience. For democracy is weakened when its bones set and its arteries harden through over-specialisation, particularly in the most socially significant professions.

It is vital to democracy that government should not become the sole concern of the specialist, whether bureaucrat or statesman. It must be studied and reflected on by the ordinary man

## WHY ADULT EDUCATION?

and woman engaged in the affairs of life. It is vital, in particular to the labour movement, that industry and economics, local administration and international relations, the social relations of science and the arts, should be studied by those whose lives they most directly affect, in an atmosphere of free enquiry and critical discussion.

The function of Adult Education hitherto has offered, with much else, some elements of compensation. It has compensated men and women for the defects of their early education on the one hand and for the cramping and narrowing influence of their work on the other. These motives will continue, but, we hope, only for a time. As the educational provision becomes more adequate and as industrial organisation becomes more efficient and more humane, it is to be hoped that young people will have much more generally the effective choice between different careers which only a few now enjoy; that they will get more satisfaction from work done with a full sense of its social function; and that more generous and contented leisure will be filled with every variety of purposive activity. To the realisation of the full significance both of the common task and of the chosen pursuit, education can make a vital contribution. In a true social democracy there will be no frustrating sense of aimlessness in life. The tasks of democracy will claim the fullest development of the citizen's powers of critical judgment, knowledge and reason. The reward of democracy will be an amplitude of life in which every taste can be cultivated and many ways of thought and feeling explored.

To provide adequately for such social needs a varied provision will be required. But it must not be forgotten that we are far from having reached such a happy position. Tedious and monotonous work, exploitation and inequality are real factors in our present situation. The challenge of Adult Education can be met neither by ignoring nor by evading them. If we are asked, how can the most effective provision be made for a more rapid development of Adult Education after the war; and, perhaps even more important, how can the seeds of interest which have been sown in these years be encouraged to germinate afresh in the soil of civilian life and in peacetime conditions—the answer must take full account of the environment and the problems of men and women in the modern world. The war

has not automatically destroyed the evils which, while they stimulated some to seek a way out for themselves and their fellows through education, made many hopeless and apathetic.

What do we mean by Adult Education? The phrase does not appear in any Education Act, though the Act of 1921 provides for the "social and physical training" of "persons over the age of 18" (§86). The classical definition is given in the Adult Education Regulations of the Board of Education: "courses designed for the liberal education of Adults". It has not gone unchallenged; for it excludes vocational studies on the one hand and propaganda on the other, and there are those who would identify it more closely with one or other of these. Moreover, the Regulations have been interpreted by the Board in such a way that some subjects—languages, for instance—have in practice been excluded from the normal activities of voluntary bodies interested in Adult Education; or, to be more precise, they have recognised voluntary bodies as competent agencies for a certain field of study only. There is much justification, indeed, for the distinction, though there will naturally be differences of opinion as to where a line, which must inevitably be an arbitrary one, shall be drawn.

The two spheres which are, obviously, most easy to distinguish, are, on the one hand, the vocational, and on the other hand the recreational. There are those, however, who hold that neither of these is or should be sharply marked off from the rest of the Adult Education field. The Education Act of 1944, in fact, in its first draft, preserved the distinction, as far as "technical, commercial and art studies" are concerned, though the Act lumps together all forms of "leisure time occupation in organised cultural training and recreative activities." By a subsequent amendment, however, the Minister removed the former distinction.

It is true that life and work are not watertight compartments, and that learning and enjoyment ought not to be divorced. Nevertheless there are sound practical reasons for different methods of approach corresponding to the different motives which induce men and women to engage in any activity. The treatment of any subject or activity undertaken for vocational reasons must necessarily be more specific than where the motive is more general. That is not to say, of course, that voca-

tional studies should be narrowly circumscribed. The medical student will not have received a complete training if he knows nothing of the social conditions which affect health, and the political system by which they in turn are conditioned; and so with the teacher, the civil servant, the architect, and the engineer. An exclusive discipline, degenerating into mere routine training, is something less than education. And, of course, just as the technical student who limits himself to learning the relevant facts and technique, is being trained rather than educated, so at the opposite pole, the student whose motive is "cultural" rather than "vocational" must nevertheless submit himself to the discipline of facts within his chosen field, if he is not to find that his "discussion" has been vague and ineffective. Each needs something of the special qualities of the other; but that is not to say that they can best profit by the same methods or even by the same institutions. Similarly, the line between Adult Education and cultural forms of recreation can, perhaps, never be precisely drawn. Nevertheless, the man who finds pleasure in acting in an impromptu "sketch" or singing in a choir, has different needs from the one who is concerned to "get to the bottom of" war or unemployment.

Nor does the fact that the same man may, at different times, be the diploma student, the violinist and the political student invalidate the argument. He will qualify for promotion by pursuing a prescribed and perhaps severe course of study. To become a member of the orchestra he may work just as hard; and it may, indeed, be the orchestra of the Technical College, but equally it may be at the works or his church, or at a musical society. To get a better understanding of literature or politics, on the other hand, he may join whatever he finds the most congenial group; and the common interests which he shared with fellow students in the technical college may well, in this case, be found elsewhere.

Experience confirms this analysis, and suggests a variety of methods of provision to meet a variety of needs.

### *The Educative Society*

In any case, some definitions are clearly essential; for the tale of the influences by which men and women are educated



—those from which they derive information, instruction and the development of their faculties—might easily be extended till it covered the whole of life. The press, the church, the wireless, travel, work and play, each leaves its impression, more or less definite and lasting, on the mind and personality. Thus a writer in *Nature*, discussing the various forms of adult education, says: "Above all, one must remember that the most important influences brought to bear on the adult citizen are not through education in the narrow sense, whether formal or informal. The part played by the press, radio, the film, pamphlets and books is beyond measure". This is clearly true, and adult education cannot neglect these things. If in what follows attention will be fixed mainly on Adult Education as an organised service, this is not because the provision of formal education can ever be isolated from other cultural forces in national life, or from the rest of the educational system. No narrow conception must be formed of the needs of the citizen of a modern "great society" for knowledge and insight, or of the agencies by which these needs can be met. Many of these require improvement and development. To take one of the most crucial, the Public Library Service is still very far from adequate. The Museum and Art Gallery, which might be stimulating and exciting—compare, for instance, the open-air Folk Museums of Scandinavia—are too often a byword for dullness. Such a powerful agency as the cinema is the victim of commercial exploitation so intense that its achievements are consistently far below the standard of its best artists. Broadcasting in this country is happily a public service, and, whatever the defects of its present organisation, has never entirely lost sight of the responsibilities involved in such a status. The press, on the other hand, whether regarded as an agency of information or of opinion, operates at all levels, some of them low indeed.

Adult Education, in the more limited sense, has contacts and links with most of these, and may be expected in the long run to influence them in its turn.

The critical examination in detail of some of these more diffused educational agencies is a matter for another occasion. It reminds us, however, that we must ultimately be concerned not with education as a function of society but with nothing less than the creation of a society which itself is educative; an ideal

which is so far from being realised at present that it implies a social revolution.

## Chapter Two

### ADULT EDUCATION AND SOCIETY

THOSE who have been most deeply concerned with Adult Education have often been most conscious of the need to re-shape our society so that the fundamental anti-educational forces give place to a life which both in its material setting and in its social purposes is profoundly educative. They look for a social order, that is to say, which will actively evoke the constructive and critical capacities of its citizens. There are moments in the life of nations when such conditions exist—not, of course, in ideal perfection, but within the inevitable limits of human affairs. They are illustrated, at opposite poles, by Athens in the fifth century, and by Russia since the Revolution. In such circumstances Adult Education in the more specialised sense seems to flourish as in a friendly air<sup>1</sup>. In the absence of the conditions which bring about such a situation, it is an illusion to suppose that the educative society can be created by superficial changes. About some of the suggestions which have been made for broadening the scope of Adult Education there is a touch of the sensationalism which is itself one of those vices of the age for which we ought to be seeking a remedy.

“It is true”, as Mr. Williams says<sup>2</sup>, “that there are some who look to Adult Education to create a brave new world in one generation and are inclined to underrate any system which fails to enrol big battalions. But among the few things in this world which cannot be created by mass production is an educated community. Nor is a superficial clean up in adult years going to put right the mischief already wrought by the imperfect and misdirected ideals which still prevail in our primary school system.”

A significant Adult Education indeed cannot be achieved by

<sup>1</sup> Cp. B. Braatoy, *The New Sweden*: “It is one of the tests of a political and economic system whether it furthers or stultifies adult education”. The chapter on Education for Citizenship in Mr. Braatoy’s book is one of the most penetrating short studies of this whole subject.

<sup>2</sup> W. E. Williams: *Adult Education in England and the U.S.A.*



stunts. In the absence of the right social conditions it is severely handicapped. What are these conditions? An effective political democracy; a large measure of social equality; and an economic system which does not frustrate the aspirations of the ordinary man—these seem to be among the most important. We hear much—and rightly—of the Danish example; but it is seldom pointed out that in Denmark the agrarian revolution had been carried out in such a way as to give scope and freedom to the peasant, and that free and compulsory popular education was introduced in Denmark in 1814, a generation before the first Folk High School came into existence, and sixty years before the compulsory Education Act in England. Adult Education in England has to contend with adverse social forces, notably a competitive economic system with its consequences in the frustration caused by unemployment and by the lack of social security. It is useless to talk of residential colleges on Danish lines to young men who are conscious that they may be “too old at twenty-five” for the economic system in which they are struggling to retain a foothold.<sup>1</sup> Adult Education can and must help to change these conditions; but it is mere romanticism to suppose that it will become a mass movement, except in relation to other and wider social changes which will fire the slower imaginations and rouse the more lethargic minds. If the age is sick, the cure must be radical. By inducing men and women to undertake the toil of thought and the effort of criticism, Adult Education can still make its most effective contribution to the coming of the educative society.

In some of the recent statements of the case for Adult Education as a part—even the most important part—of the national provision, these fundamental social factors seem to have been ignored. Education is treated as something “good in itself” which can be considered apart from the kind of society in which it is set. “The nourishment of the mind and spirit must be provided throughout the whole of life”, says the British Institute of Adult Education.<sup>2</sup> “People should study”, says Sir Richard Livingstone,<sup>3</sup> quoting Aristotle, “for the sake

<sup>1</sup> Cp. “*Disinherited Youth*”—a survey 1936–39, published by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.

<sup>2</sup> *Plan for Adult Education*.

<sup>3</sup> *The Future in Education* (W.E.A. edition, p. 71).

of their own development and with a view to excellence." But nourishment is unavailing where appetite is nauseated by sickness; and the possibilities of excellence look differently from college windows and from a place in an unemployed queue.

There are, indeed, and no doubt always will be, those to whom purely disinterested studies make their own appeal; but it is not surprising that a majority of those who have been attracted to Adult Education in other than practical and vocational forms, has been urged by the desire to understand and to correct the existing maladjustments of social life.

The direction of so much of current effort in Adult Education towards these ends has, however, been the subject of criticism. In the view of a Committee of the British Institute of Adult Education, a defect of our existing Adult Education has been "the classification of subjects into an unnatural hierarchy in which economics, political science, and industrial history have been given the chief seats".<sup>1</sup> No such hierarchy has, of course, ever been imposed. The guiding principle in the organisation of Adult Education in England is the right of the students themselves to decide what they wish to study. It is the business of the educational system to provide what adult students want, not what the educators think they ought to want. If a "hierarchy" has emerged as a result, it is significant of genuine trends of feeling and interest and not of some educationists' theories. It is notable that no one who could speak from the point of view of the majority of the population whose economic status is permanently insecure was among the members of the distinguished committee which drafted the report from which this quotation is taken. People turned to the study of economics in the years before and after the first World War, as they turned to the study of international relations in the years after 1933, because they were aware of a profound disharmony, first in the economic and then in the international ordering of modern society; a disharmony which frustrated "their own development"; which was hostile to every kind of "excellence"; and which made the "nourishment of the mind and spirit" a mockery. Among those who have felt this most strongly, a certain number have been prepared to make a con-

<sup>1</sup> *Plan for Adult Education.*

siderable effort in order to understand "the roots of the trouble"; but they have approached the study of their problem from their own point of departure, not according to some logical scheme or academic syllabus. It is true that the inert mass of the people have been either only vaguely and fitfully aware of the nature of their own malaise, or too lacking in mental energy, and too diffident, owing to their meagre schooling, to join in the enterprise of Adult Education. The fact that this is so is itself part of the social disease we are considering. In the words of the Adult Education Committee which was set up by the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1918, "the effects of evil industrial and social conditions will persist after the conditions themselves are removed, and new conditions will be reflected but gradually in new standards of life and citizenship".<sup>1</sup>

It is important to state these fundamentals before going on to an analysis of the scope and range of Adult Education as it should be provided in a complete system of national education. Some of the statements on the subject seem to offer an anodyne to men who are faint for lack of food. In the last war men's minds and consciences were stirred by a powerful analysis of "the sickness of an acquisitive society". That sickness has not been healed. Indeed, the present war is its crisis; and whether the outcome is to be cure or collapse is still uncertain. The most urgent task for Adult Education is to help to rally the vital forces in a sick civilisation. "It is not the lack of goodwill that is to be feared. But goodwill without mental effort . . . is worse than useless; it is a moral opiate. The real lack in our national history has been the lack of bold and clear thinking." These words were written twenty-six years ago. Experience in the interval has only underlined their significance.<sup>2</sup> Thousands of ordinary men and women have become aware, under the stress of war conditions, of the need for applying a more stable and satisfying principle to social organisation. To help them to find such a principle and to work out its implications is the greatest service that can be rendered. No one can provide them with a ready-made answer; for if the solution is to be democratic it must emerge from the effort of thought of ordinary men and

<sup>1</sup> Industrial and Social Conditions in relation to Adult Education.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

women. What Adult Education can do is to help them to organise their own vague intimations; and it can do this best by providing the opportunity to examine the problems and the alternatives, and to gain confidence in their own judgment by facing the problems in study and discussion.

If there is any truth in this analysis, the outlines of current Adult Education turn out to be, not an "unnatural hierarchy" but, on the contrary, a reflection of the ordinary man's experience. The core and centre of any worth while system of Adult Education must be in studies which illuminate the real problems of life. "The toad beneath the harrow knows" what his most pressing problems are, and it is still a vital principle that men and women should be able to say for themselves what interests they most need to pursue. It is useless to seek to evade the plain fact that the crucial questions at present are those concerning the ordering of a just and stable social and international system. Education for leisure—the cultivation of personal interests, hobbies, and of various forms of cultural recreation—is certainly desirable. It is all the more important in that an increasing amount of leisure ought to be an important element in the social dividend of our present stage of technical progress. But education for adjustment to social change is surely crucial. The vast implications of the fact that, whether we like it or not, in this age of the aeroplane and wireless, we have become part of what Mr. Wendell Willkie has called "One World" have to be realised by ordinary men and women. The meaning for ourselves of the technical and social evolution which is becoming so rapid; the bearings of such policies as the "Beveridge Plan" for social security, full employment, the new Education Act: all these challenge our thinking. They are the new and radical forms of the old issues about the nature and ends of society and the individual's relation to it. What seemed to Plato, to Dante, to Sir Thomas More, to Rousseau, and to Marx—to take a few named from a long roll—the questions most worth considering, are surely not less worthy of man's thought and study "in the time of the breaking of nations". The question is, how to make it possible for the largest number of men and women to face these questions and feel braced by them, instead of feeling, as they so often do to-day, crushed and frustrated by the burden of a



social order which they do not understand and feel powerless to influence or control.

The recognition, however, that Adult Education when responsive to men's urgent interests will necessarily have a scale of values of its own, does not imply that it must be limited in scope. The studies to which Sir Richard Livingstone<sup>1</sup> would give priority—those, namely, which have a central place in the Danish People's High School—Literature and History are, indeed, among those most valuable for illuminating the broader aspects of life. They open wide horizons. It is through them that many make their first approach: others pass on from more specific studies to these in their search for a satisfying view of life as a whole.

The present cannot be fully understood without some knowledge of the past; nor can a man interpret his own experience of life without comparing it with others, and imaginative literature can enable a man both to see his own environment with new eyes and to enter into the lives of other men. These two fields of knowledge are closed to a large number of men and women, partly by the limitations of early education, partly by the lack of peace and leisure amid the noisy distractions of modern life.

For the cultural life of any healthy society is not divorced from its other manifestations. A powerful creative, social purpose is in no way inconsistent with the development among the people of a true and sensitive culture. Indeed it is the necessary condition of democratic culture; and the evident signs of malaise in the literature of recent decades reflects only too faithfully the mood of a society which has lost its sense of direction and purpose.

The scope of adult education is determined, then, by the choice made by students of the subjects which they will study. What the biggest group of them desire at present, judging from the preferences they express, is to get a clear vision of social organisation, its meaning and purpose, and to satisfy their desire for principles of right and justice by which to test it, and to which they can endeavour to shape it for themselves. These desires are no less evident among those who have come fresh to adult education, in its more elementary forms, during the war, than among the students of Tutorial Classes. This means

<sup>1</sup> *Education for a World Adrift.*

that, if their wishes are to be met, adult education must give them the opportunity to gain some measure of social and political perspective, through history and contemporary studies, including the principles and methods of science in relation to modern life. Thus social biology and psychology are relevant as well as economics and the more topical approaches to social and political understanding. Vision and insight too will be sought, through philosophy, literature and art, as the range of interest broadens with the habit of study.

It is necessary, at this point, however, to try to clear away a misunderstanding that is frequently met with. The proposed field of study has been indicated in very broad outlines, and two points must be emphasised. It is not suggested that "subjects" have any absolute value or even any real existence. They are beaten tracks in the open field of knowledge. But Adult Education is far more free than most other stages of education from any slavery to preconceived subject categories. It has, indeed, been one of the most powerful agencies making for a human rather than an academic approach, and if learned bodies like the British Association and even the Universities themselves are nowadays thinking in terms of wider "subjects", the experience of forty years in adult education is certainly one of the factors which have helped to produce this result.<sup>1</sup>

One hears so much of the "W.E.A. type of student" as being "academic" or "intellectual"<sup>2</sup>, that it is necessary to emphasise the fact that he is, on the contrary, the ordinary man (or woman), whose qualifications for studying the problems (rather than "subjects") in which he is interested come from experience of life and a questioning attitude of mind and not from anything in the least "academic" in his interests. He is the unspecialist student, interested not from the angle of systematic scholarship but from that of humanity. Consciously or unconsciously he is often seeking through education to work out problems—personal or social or, as often is the case, mixed. In the expressive phrase of one W.E.A. student, he is feeling his way towards "social gumption". But he may be

<sup>1</sup> E.g. The British Association's suggestion for a new type of degree course combining science and social studies.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Maxwell Garnett: *The World we Mean to Make*, refers to "the intellectual elite who attend W.E.A. classes".



doing so at a level of serious and sustained interest, and it is the Tutorial Class which then naturally attracts him; or he may be at the stage of relatively fitful and superficial interest, and may find less strenuous courses meet his needs. In either case, he may or may not be "intellectually" gifted. It is not by a mental means test that men are graded in adult education: it is by the test of serious purpose; and they themselves are their own assessors.

This kind of interest, again, can be stimulated—and that is the main purpose of voluntary organisations—or it can often be distracted. And here is the need for care about the prescriptions, which sometimes find favour, for providing substitute satisfactions. The case for opportunities of practicing crafts or developing hobbies is obvious. These are interests common to us all at some seasons. But there is a certain romanticism about the view that there is a "non-academic type" for whom practical activities are the proper alternative, and that Adult Education has failed to reach the millions because it has put the emphasis on the brain rather than the hand. As has been argued above, this is to misconceive entirely the function of adult education in relation to democracy, and the range of social and cultural study with which the Adult Education movement is concerned. It is the unconscious expression of a contempt for the mental capacity and judgment of the common man *within the sphere of studies related to his own experience*. It is, again, a current in the tide of anti-intellectualism which has swept over our generation and of which the foaming breakers are seen in fascism.

Let us provide more fully for the interests of a practical type, by all means. But in doing so we have not solved the problem, so often posed, of how to attract the millions to educational interests in order to strengthen democracy. That this problem is a socio-psychological problem has been argued above.

To return to the question of the central core of adult education, the "subjects" mentioned above have in common the light they can throw on human personality and human relations: and it is only in so far as they are so treated that they are likely to win a response. Aldous Huxley in a penetrating passage analyses the defects of academic education in schools.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ends and Means*, 1s.

"In academic education as we know it to-day, the principle of integration is mainly scientific and historical. We can put the matter in another way and say that the frame of reference is logical and factual, and that the facts with which the logical intellect is trained to deal are mainly facts about the material universe and about humanity as a part of the material universe. . . . Scientific historians treat facts about human beings as though they were facts about the material universe. . . .

"The man who goes through a course of our academic education may come out a parrot. In this case we say that the education has failed its purpose. Or he may come out as an efficient specialist. In this case we say that the education has been only partially successful. Or else (and when this happens we think that education has worked very successfully) he may emerge as an intellectual—that is to say, a person who has learned to establish relations between the different elements of his sum of knowledge, one who possesses a coherent system of relationships into which he can fit all such new items of information as he may pick up in the course of his life. . . .

"The parrot repeats, but does not understand; the narrow specialist understands . . . only his speciality; the accomplished intellectual understands . . . but does so only theoretically. He knows, but is fired by no desire to act upon his knowledge, and has received no training in such action. . . .

"Technical education is without a principle of integration; academic education makes use of a principle that integrates . . . in terms of . . . the laws of the material universe. What is needed is another principle of integration, . . . that will co-ordinate the scattered fragments, the island universes of specialised or merely professional knowledge; . . .

"What should be the nature of this new principle of integration? The answer seems clear enough, at any rate in its main outlines: it should be psychological and ethical. . . . Within the new frame of reference, co-ordination of knowledge and experience would be made in human terms; . . .

"Man is the only subject in which, whatever their type or the degree of their ability, all men are interested. . . ."

It is then, the human problem which, in one degree or another, concerns us all and on which education can and should throw light. The interest in and concern for human

welfare and progress is a motive shared by most men, with varying degrees of intensity at different times. True, it does not always express itself in the same terms or always consciously seek educational satisfaction. But it is there to be appealed to.

There will, of course, be many fascinating interests which some or others will wish to explore. To learn languages; to practise crafts; to specialise in one of a thousand branches of knowledge—these and other things will appeal to individuals, and, as has been said, the opportunity should be available for their pursuit of whatever interests or hobbies attract them. In the national system of education it is very proper that provision should be made, as the Education Act puts it, for “leisure time occupation in such organised cultural training and recreative activities as are suited to their requirements for any persons . . . who are able and willing to profit” by such facilities. Nevertheless, it is convenient to preserve the accepted term “non-vocational Adult Education” for a broad and recognisable area of the whole field of “Further Education”, or education for adults. It is true that such a definition cannot be rigid or final. Adult Education will inevitably shade off into purely technical studies at one edge, into dilettante studies and recreation at another. All of these have their place. It is only claimed here that certain broad distinctions are possible, and, indeed, essential, however unfashionable this view may be at the moment.

There are some who would argue that the barriers should be thrown down and that Adult Education should be organised in such a way that all these various activities are brought into close relations with each other. It should be remembered, however, that we are not without experience of such a system. Under the Board of Education's Regulations for Further Education, courses may be—and are—provided to meet almost every variety of possible adult interest, from pure recreation (e.g. golf and ballroom dancing)<sup>1</sup> to strictly technical studies, and including the arts, religion, and much else. As far as can be discovered “instruction” is the only limiting word in these Regulations. Such provision may be made in an Institute

<sup>1</sup> A Society for Chess Education has recently been formed; and there is nothing to prevent L.E.A.s providing for this form of intellectual recreation.

which may be part of a Technical College, or a separate building like the City Literary Institute, or it may be merely a "night school" programme at the local school. In extreme forms the argument for co-ordination is carried so far as to suggest that technical institutions can provide effectively for all interests.

One of the lessons, however, which emerges most clearly from experience is the desirability of providing separately for certain broad types of interest. Thus the L.C.C. has devised Men's and Women's Institutes for the more practical recreational types of interest, and the Literary Institutes for the more serious minded students, while retaining specialist Technical Institutes of various kinds. Similarly, in other areas it is found that there is a limit to the mixing of varied interests and to the capacity of a single type of organisation to cater for them all without sacrificing one to another. History confirms this view. The Mechanics Institutes, for instance, had, ninety years ago, "become little more than places of entertainment, attracting audiences and members by light and humorous lectures, dancing classes, and so forth".<sup>1</sup> The most striking example is to be found in the experience of Scotland where the autonomy of Adult Education as understood by the voluntary bodies has never been fully conceded, and where the statistics seem to show that the result is the starvation of those studies which are vital to conscious and active citizenship.

In many democratic countries this more purposive stream has found expression in the movement for Workers' Education. This does not mean that, at least in this country, it has ever been exclusive. The centre of gravity of the "social pyramid" is not to be found near its apex; and the movement reflects this fundamental sociological fact. It is open to all—but on the clear understanding that those who join do so in its own democratic spirit; that they accept the principle that a popular educational movement should reflect the main social interests and purposes of the people, and should be free of all patronage or condescension. Such a movement should be, like a University, a community of learning; though, unlike a University, its untrained members make their own contribution based on experience of life.

<sup>1</sup> *The Beginnings of the Working Men's College*, by R. B. Litchfield (1902).



*Education for Democracy*

Adult Education in England has come to be generally accepted as a movement "non sectarian and non party in politics". The principle is valuable and important, but the phrase is often misunderstood. A large part of the work is and must continue to be political, in the broadest sense, since it is concerned, very largely, not so much with the individual student as with the student as a member of a social group. Politics is and ought to be one of the most important concerns of men and women. The purpose of Adult Education is defined by different people in different ways—as education for leisure on the one hand, and as education for democracy or for citizenship on the other. There can be no question which of these goes deeper. Leisure for leisure's sake is not a compelling ideal. Leisure as a part of life—contributory to the major purposes of the individual—is an inspiring conception; but the major purposes of the individual must be purposes which are not narrowly self-regarding. "Man is a political animal". The man is the citizen. It is not, of course, that he will be merged in a social whole, but that he lives his fullest life as an active member of an organised community. A democratic society will have many facets, but one brilliance will be reflected from them all.

It is vital to Adult Education that its conception of democracy—the central illumination—shall be true and clear. The word is on many lips to-day, but it is not equally significant on them all. Much discussion of education is apt to become unreal because of a failure to relate democratic theory to the contemporary situation. A purely formal democracy, derived from nineteenth century models, is not enough. What is needed is education for constructive democracy in terms of twentieth century needs.

The problems which occupy men's minds in the society of the twentieth century are largely concerned with economic organisation. They have to decide whether the ultimate control of economic forces is to be in the freely competing entrepreneur, or in the combine or cartel, or in the State; how the individual may secure some effective share in such control and feel that his own part in the economic enterprise with which he is concerned is a vital and not an incidental one, and so on. If men are to be able to feel that the economic system has a

social purpose with which they can identify themselves and which they can help to shape, it is education that must help them to do so. The mechanism of a real economic democracy has yet to be created, but in considering education for citizenship, we ought to think of civic responsibility in economic as well as political terms. Adult Education must therefore be prepared to help the worker to get such an understanding of the industrial structure and economic forces which dictate his experience as will enable him to ensure that they are being directed to purposes which he can understand and approve, and which he has helped to decide. Knowledge alone can counteract the sense of frustration which comes of feeling oneself part of a machine whose operation is only dimly apprehended and is often vaguely felt to be anti-social if not positively inhuman. Indeed, the more close-knit and controlled the economic system becomes, the greater the need for education, if the individual is to play his part.

The third—namely, the social—aspect of democracy is from some points of view the most important. It has been largely realised in terms of social equality in many countries—Scandinavia, Switzerland, the British Dominions, and France—in varying degrees, but in each case more completely than in Great Britain, where the aristocratic as well as the plutocratic elements are more firmly planted, and where a separate system of education plays such an important part. The reflection of this social division in the sphere of Adult Education tends sometimes to take the form of a kind of patronage which is really intolerable. The element of self-government and freedom of choice and of organisation which has played so great a part in Adult Education in England must at all costs be preserved.

#### *Adult Education and "National Purpose"*

It has been suggested in a recent pamphlet<sup>1</sup> that the trouble with English education is the lack of a sufficiently bold sense of national purpose; and again, from a different angle,<sup>2</sup> that "the ultimate concern of education" is with the question "how does society cohere?" Clearly, no discussion of education is adequate which fails to face this central issue.

<sup>1</sup> *Educational Aims. Report of the Conservative Education Committee.*

<sup>2</sup> Sir F. Clarke: *Education for Social Change*, p. 67.



A purpose which is conceived as "an ardent understanding of" and service to "the State's needs"<sup>1</sup> can never satisfy the worker. On the one hand, the State is the agent of society, and only one of its agents—the agent for certain purposes; and it is to other agencies, social and religious, for example, that men look for the fulfilment of some of their most important aims. Many political thinkers, indeed, would regard it as the ultimate test of the State's success that it provides the conditions in which the various free activities of a many sided social life can flourish. Extremes meet; and where the liberal would limit the state to the task of keeping order and "holding the ring" for the free activities of individuals,<sup>1</sup> the communist hopes that the State will eventually wither away and leave behind a society of free and varied groups. If both these utopias seem remote, in the world as we know it, we have had a sufficiently close view of the totalitarian State to cool our ardour about "the State's needs" until certain other questions have been asked. What kind of State? and what is its relation in turn to the larger community of mankind? The State based on naked power; on privilege; on wealth; none of these can command the "ardent service" demanded in the passage quoted. The national purposes which can enlist the support of democratic education must be those which make possible the fulfilment of life for all its members; they must include, for instance, in modern conditions, social security, and opportunities to take part in the constructive tasks of their time (such as were denied to so many in the years of depression and unemployment after 1931), and, in short, all that is summed up in the phrase "social justice".

A fundamentally united society would not need to glorify the State, though neither would it be morbidly afraid of its activities in its proper sphere. It is in a society reft by deep fissures that totalitarian forms emerge. In a completely satisfactory democracy there would be a wide variety of adult social and educational agencies giving full play to the initiative of the people. We are far from having such a united and democratic society in this country, but we have a priceless heritage in the tradition of "voluntary organisations"—and we should hesitate long before we relinquish so great a moral asset. Indeed,

<sup>1</sup> For a restatement of nineteenth century liberalism, see Hayek: *The Record of Serfdom*.

in what has been said and written, often by distinguished authorities, on the question of Adult Education, it is surprising to find so little realisation of the part which such organisations play in the general political education and in increasing the social awareness of their members. If those who study in tutorial and other formal classes are still too lamentably few; if the need for more elementary forms of social education is obvious, it must still not be forgotten that the trade union branch, the co-operative guild, the women's institute, the multiplicity, indeed, of social organisations, largely effects for the worker to-day what the chapels did for the radical worker of a previous age.

It is not suggested that this kind of political "learning by doing" is in itself sufficient. It needs the clarifying influence of study, discussion and reflection to bring out its significance, and this is indeed an important part of the case for workers' education. But what is here contended is that many academically trained people habitually under-estimate the value of mutual association in working class organisations as a preparation for citizenship. Indeed, the politically conscious or trade union conscious worker has often a more vital sense of citizenship—even though he may suffer from confusion of thought on many issues—than the finely trained scholar who knows nothing of such active comradeship. One of the distinctive achievements of workers' education in Great Britain has been to bring together in a community of learning the scholar with his knowledge and intellectual training and the man or woman who has matriculated through active citizenship.

The purpose of Adult Education, then, must be defined in terms of the purpose of the society (not the State) in which it exists and its organisation ought to reflect its purpose. There will, indeed, be divided views on what that purpose ought to be. Many of those who turn to Adult Education feel that society is in principle, though not yet in practice, a social, economic, and political democracy, striving to realise through co-operation, not through rivalry and greed, and in equality and fellowship, not in hierarchy and patronage, a fuller life for all its members; and to co-operate with other national societies in pursuing the same ends. What those ends are, both in the ultimate analysis and in terms of more immediate policies will, as has been said,

arouse keen debate. In time of war there is a community of purpose which makes great achievements possible. In the post-war years there is room, as Sir William Beveridge has shown us, for something of the same community of purpose—the definition of a common enemy to be attacked, the five-headed giant of Want, Ignorance, Squalor, Disease and Idleness. There will still be room for difference on the strategy of this crusade. But what is essential is that there should be the widest possible diffusion of informed thinking and discussion on these and kindred problems. It is likely to be found, as President Roosevelt said in the early days of the New Deal, and as the war has shown again, that the events of these years cause “a greater interest in government, in the problems of government and the purposes of government” than any similar period of our history.<sup>1</sup>

In such a context the importance of co-operation, not force, as the method of progress is central. “Social reconstruction”, it has been finely said, “is not something which can be bestowed as a gift, or adroitly smuggled through, or dictated from above by imposing on an indifferent or ill-informed mass the most ingenious schemes of the subtlest intelligences. You should not do it that way if you could. Reconstruction, if it is to be a reality, not a phrase in perorations, must be based on a broad foundation of informed conviction among ordinary men and women, who know what they want and the way to obtain it. Nor can such a foundation be laid merely by oratory and propaganda. There is a place, and an important place, for both: but we need light as well as heat. The best citizen—and, indeed, the best propagandist, negotiator and politician—is the man who knows his opponent’s case better than his opponent, and is not taken off his guard by objections or paralysed by difficulties, because both are old acquaintances against whom he has measured himself before he entered the battle. The condition of such knowledge, and of the initiative and resourcefulness which only knowledge can give, is education; and education not confined to a minority, but widely diffused.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> F. D. Roosevelt: speech to the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, Dec., 1933.

<sup>2</sup> R. H. Tawney: *Education: The Task before Us*—Presidential Address to the W.E.A. Annual Conference, 1943, p. 4.

If this is to be our principle of progress, Adult Education is clearly vital. Without it the ordinary man or woman is blind-fold. Nor are knowledge and understanding only the instruments of progress which should be in the hand of all the partners to the enterprise. They are also an essential element in the goal itself. Through knowledge men arm themselves for the struggle; and knowledge is itself the prize. The "noble race" will have as its mark not only the flame of freedom but the light of knowledge too. Indeed, the two cannot be separated; and the flame of freedom must be kept alive if the light of knowledge is to spread. For Adult Education, freedom is essential.

### *Chapter Three*

## PRINCIPLES OF ORGANISATION

ADULT EDUCATION considered as a series of activities deliberately chosen to illuminate life, and principally its main social purposes, and pursued through co-operation and in freedom: how ought this to be organised?

There ought not to be a single pattern to which all forms of Adult Education must conform, nor a single administrative ambit within which they must come. But certain principles clearly emerge from our experience in Britain and elsewhere. The principle that the students must be free to initiate their own courses and to share equally with the educational agencies in planning and controlling them, is fundamental. It is a principle which the Board of Education has clearly understood for a good many years and to which the Universities generally speaking have been loyal. One disadvantage of the tendency to institutionalise Adult Education is seen in the issue of prospectuses setting out the syllabus of proposed courses which are "on offer". These have their advantages as an advertising device; but they do not meet the needs of a group coming together with common interests and working out with a tutor the course that will meet their case.

If anything is absolutely vital to success in Adult Education it is the principle of freedom of enquiry. The students must be able to feel that they have the right to study the subjects of



their choice; to say what they think; and to follow the argument wherever it may lead. Only thus can the implications of particular arguments be clearly seen, and only thus can they have the confidence which will justify continuing with any line of enquiry. A necessary corollary of this principle is the right to be consulted in the choice of a tutor. The knowledge that any tutor's "certificate of employment" (to use the terms of army education) was liable to be withdrawn on grounds other than incompetence as a teacher, would undermine such confidence. If this now time-honoured principle is here re-stated it is not merely for completeness of exposition. It is because there is no certainty that it may not again be challenged; and in this as in other matters, eternal vigilance is the only safeguard. A vigorous adult educational organisation linking up local groups in a national movement, is the best custodian of those interests which are common to all the students, and which may be challenged in future, as they have been in the past, as different counsels may come to prevail in one or other locality. The W.E.A. which has the advantage of seeing these questions in the light of experience, not only in different localities, but also in other countries, including the British Dominions, can best appreciate the need for vigilance.

Experience goes to show that the effective safeguard of free enquiry in Adult Education is to be found in the organisation of students in a movement which is at once the permanent embodiment of this fundamental principle, and also the medium for their own self expression: and the recognition of their organisation as the responsible body, in partnership on terms of equality with the educational authorities and other agencies. The traditional organisation of Adult Education in England and Wales (but not in Scotland) gives full recognition to this principle.

### *The Issue of Freedom*

Here and there, however, instances have occurred which underline the necessity for vigilance; for other departments of State and occasionally even Local Education Authorities have not been so sensitive. The War Office has been more receptive than many would have believed possible; but the notorious case of the "censored" Beveridge A.B.C.A. Bulletin, even if

one could be confident that it was an isolated case, shows what possibilities there are; though it is not clear how far any such interference may have come less from the War Office machine than from those political forces which have always been suspicious of free discussion in Adult Education. Here and there Local Education Authorities have been known to question the persistence of a class in its chosen studies on the ground that some less "political" course should be chosen; or to direct that in a certain village preference is to be given to one kind of organisation rather than to another, on similar grounds.

The difference between free Adult Education and a State controlled service of public information could not be better expressed than in the contrast between the two following statements. The War Office at the beginning of the war accepted a statement embodying the principles and practice of Adult Education in the following terms:—

"Attendance will, of course, be voluntary and it is essential that the demand should come from below, that is to say that the lectures or classes should represent what the men themselves want to hear or to study. The range of subjects asked for will be wide and should not be in any way arbitrarily restricted."

Compare with this the answer given by the Minister of Information<sup>1</sup> to a question on the lecturers of the Ministry:—

"Speakers on behalf of the Ministry of Information have been discouraged from dealing with political issues that are still in controversy. Most reconstruction questions inevitably raise such issues. For this reason Ministry speakers are requested to avoid the subject of post-war reconstruction except in so far as it is covered by declared Government policy. I see no reason to alter this rule."

A recent episode in America may be quoted as a further example, if any were needed, of the importance of vigilance in this matter of free discussion. A well known American broadcaster, according to the *New Republic*<sup>2</sup>, criticised the activities of the reactionary Dies Committee. The Chairman of this Committee demanded time on the air to reply and got it. "It was so arranged that Winchell could not answer him on the

<sup>1</sup> *Hansard*, December 8th, 1942.

<sup>2</sup> April 10th, 1944.



same evening," but he did so the following week. "But although Winchell won the argument, he lost the battle. Two passages of crucial importance . . . were deleted from the Winchell script by order of the head of the lotion company which sponsors the broadcasts, and along with this specific case of censorship came an even more serious case of blanket censorship . . . that, at any rate, seems the construction to be placed on the statement 'the subject is closed as far as this programme is concerned'; and the further statement that the programme 'is not intended as a public forum for the discussion of political partisan or other controversial or personal differences', 'but as a vehicle for enjoyment and entertainment'."

It may be said that here is an example of the dangers of having broadcasting under the control of private commercial interests. We cannot forget, however, that even the B.B.C. has been subject to similar pressure, perhaps in a milder form, as in the case of Mr. Priestley's broadcasts in 1940. Indeed, the conclusion of anyone who is concerned to preserve freedom of enquiry and discussion must be that in the modern world it cannot be entrusted absolutely with safety to any authority; that the principle enshrined in the Ministry of Information statement quoted above must never be allowed to creep into Adult Education and that if this is to be ensured the students themselves and those who are concerned for democratic education must combine to preserve their right of organisation and their right to an effective voice in the control of educational provision.

### *The Principle of Voluntary Organisation*

The place of the voluntary organisation in Adult Education, however, does not only depend on the necessity for preserving freedom, though this is perhaps its most vital justification. Other, and at first sight perhaps more incidental, factors come into play. To provide a varied and attractive programme of classes and other educational fare, skilfully planned and imaginatively presented in an institute or centre providing the most attractive and convenient accommodation and fitted with all kinds of useful equipment—even this would not necessarily ensure that the service met all the needs of the enquiring citizen. This does not mean that the place of variety and of

convenience is negligible: far from it. Adult Education has suffered much—or rather, those taking part in it have suffered—from the discomfort of the surroundings in which it has often had to be carried on. It is time that better accommodation was much more generally available. But what is even more essential is that men and women should feel that they are getting, not what some skilful organiser or administrator has provided for them, but what they have wanted for themselves. To be the customer of an attractive educational emporium may satisfy some needs: others will be more exacting. “The awakening of individuals and organisations to a realisation of their educational needs; the development of organs through which those needs can become articulate; the stimulus to effort supplied by movements and societies, which widen the student’s horizon, and deepen his sense of responsibility by enabling him, instead of being the passive recipient of education, to play an active part in moulding its character; the association in classes of men and women who share common interests outside them; the promotion of free criticism by students of each other and of the teacher by them all, are equally indispensable. It is primarily through the action of voluntary bodies that these essential elements in a vigorous system of Adult Education have been contributed.”<sup>1</sup>

What was said on this subject in the valuable report of the Board of Education’s Adult Education Committee, from which the above quotation is taken, has lost none of its point in the ten years which have elapsed since its publication; and a somewhat lengthy quotation is justified by the impossibility of bettering the Committee’s words. It still remains true that “to announce the establishment of a class is easy; to draw into it men and women who left school at 14, and who, though keenly interested in one group of problems or another, have never thought of such problems as the subject-matter of education, and are quite unaware, that, by attending it, they will be helped to study them under friendly teachers in a congenial atmosphere, with fellow-students who share their interests, is very often the reverse. To provide an audience for a lecture, or brief course of lectures, requires less effort than to maintain in

<sup>1</sup> *Adult Education and the Local Education Authority* (H.M.S.O.), pp. 119–120.

existence a large number of classes in non-vocational subjects, regularly attended, making often, and properly making, exacting claims on their members, lasting for several years at a time and leading to similar classes in the future. Propaganda to attract men and women who, like many working-class students, feel diffidence, and the establishment of the close personal relations which cause the members to feel a class to be their own and give it continuity, are alike indispensable."

"The view sometimes expressed, therefore," the Report adds, "that the work of such bodies represents a passing phase in the history of the Movement which was necessary in its infancy, while voluntary effort was required to claim a new territory for education, but which is destined to be superseded as classes administered by Local Education Authorities are more extensively established, seems to us a superficial one. Even if, which is far from being the case, the pioneering days of Adult Education were over, it would still remain true that, as is emphasised in the interesting memorandum submitted to us by the County Councils Association, it possesses 'a distinctive character, differing from other evening school work', which it is important to preserve. That character it owes partly to the fact that, while aided by official encouragement, it has enjoyed a large measure of freedom in developing the educational methods best calculated to meet the varying needs of different types of students. It has evolved on the basis of a partnership between public authorities on the one hand and voluntary organisation on the other. If its financial stability could not have been secured in the absence of the assistance to adult classes provided by the former, neither the enthusiasm which it has evoked, nor the seriousness of the work which, at its best, it has produced, would have been attained without the efforts of the latter. It is essential, in our view, that this partnership should continue."

## *Flexibility of Organisation*

The second principle, therefore, which should be preserved, is that of flexibility. It would be a disservice to the cause if it should be proposed to absorb all adult educational efforts within a single type of organisation, whether this took the form of a local institute of Adult Education, or of a single adminis-

trative unit. The next step forward in Adult Education will, it is hoped, include the provision by Local Education Authorities and by Universities, in co-operation with the W.E.A., of well-equipped centres in which the work can flourish in conditions of, to say the least, reasonable convenience. But something would be lost as well as gained if this advance were accompanied by restrictions on the initiative which groups of students have enjoyed in their voluntary associations. "There is room", as Mr. Greenwood once put it, "for educational nonconformity. . . . Variety is the spice of education."<sup>1</sup>

It is particularly to the Local Education Authorities that the appeal must be made for a recognition that administrative symmetry has its limitations in such a service as Adult Education. The point has been effectively put by a far sighted Director of Education. "The system of Local Government in Education, essential and precious as it is", says Mr. Henry Morris,<sup>2</sup> "requires a supplement. The control of education in England . . . tends to be administrative rather than cultural." He argues, therefore, in favour of "independent voluntary bodies for cultural purposes receiving public help on condition of reaching defined standards", whether academic or artistic, on the grounds that, as Lord Keynes has said, "a subsidised autonomous body may well do something important through inadvertence or daring which would be thought improper by a Government Department."

Thus, the idea of a Village College is understood to include the opportunity for voluntary organisations to share in the advantages which it offers while retaining their own identity. The importance of this can be seen, to take a single example, in the case of the Women's Institutes. Women's Institutes often apply to the Local Education Authority for classes in practical or recreational—more occasionally also in "cultural"—subjects. Such classes could well be provided within a Village College. But a Women's Institute is part of a wider national movement with an organic unity and a life of its own. The W.E.A. is in a similar case; and in a Village College, like Impington, the local W.E.A. Branch is able to carry on its work. Such well equipped

<sup>1</sup> A. Greenwood: *The Relation of the Universities and Education Authorities to Adult Education*, 1919.

<sup>2</sup> *Education Handbook*, ed. Woodhead, p. 97.



places where a group seeking knowledge can feel at home, while retaining their place in their own chosen national organisation, can be invaluable.

The W.E.A. can, and does, provide classes for Trade Unions, Co-operative Societies, Working Men's Clubs, and other social organisations which wish to preserve their identity and to meet, very often, in their accustomed meeting places. Indeed, it is not only in the cities that this takes place. It has been known for a village group to desire to hold a class, for good reasons of its own, in some building other than a school, and for the Local Education Authority to refuse recognition unless the class were transferred to the school. Such administrative pettiness would ill accord with an attempt to expand the scope of Adult Education in our post-war life. If adequate, still more if inspiring, accommodation is to be provided for Adult Education, it will soon attract those who are interested in study to meet where such advantages are available. They should be encouraged to come without being asked to sacrifice the community of interest which has brought them together. On the other hand, any group which has its own reasons for wishing to meet elsewhere should not be frowned upon.

The example of Vaughan College, Leicester, is relevant here. This is an Adult Education Institute which was brought into being in the last century and reorganised in 1926 when a new scheme of government was drawn up and approved by the Board of Education. This provided for the taking over of the College by University College and for the College to become the "down town" headquarters for the administration of the extra-mural department of University College. At the same time University College undertook that regard should be paid to the work hitherto carried on under the old régime and facilities offered for classes in home nursing, cookery, handicrafts, needlework, horticulture, and other subjects which do not find a place in the work of an extra-mural department. The direction of the educational policy of the College was vested in an extra-mural delegacy consisting of three representatives each from the Council of University College, Leicester Education Committee, and the former Governors of Vaughan Working Men's College; two from the Workers' Educational Association; and one each from Leicester Co-



operative Society, University College, Nottingham, and Loughborough College, together with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of University College Council; the Principal and the Director of Extra-Mural Studies of University College, and the Director of Education for the City of Leicester.

The College building consists of a common room, a hall capable of holding 300 people and equipped with a stage and a sound-cinema apparatus, a library, a kitchen, and eight class rooms, one of which is equipped as a laboratory. At present the demand for room for classes is so great that the library, the hall, and occasionally even the offices, have to be used as class rooms. Under the new régime arrangements were made for the continuation of classes in domestic subjects, handicrafts, and languages, by establishing an Adult Evening Institute in the building under a Superintendent appointed by the Leicester Education Committee. This Institute occupies one-half of the class rooms available. Students are encouraged to enrol for classes in both departments at a reduced fee.

Though a varied programme of work is available in the College, there has been no limitation of the development of Adult Education outside. The W.E.A. Branch, which has its headquarters in the College, organises a steadily increasing number of classes in other parts of the City. Here, then, is a happy combination of functions in an effective form of co-operation.

### *Chapter Four*

## THE NEEDS OF ADULT EDUCATION

**W**HAT is lacking in the provision of Adult Education as we know it at present, that might help to make it more efficient?

The question falls to be considered under three heads. It concerns the attraction and recruitment of students; the quality and methods of teaching; and the standard and adequacy of accommodation and equipment. Each, of course, reacts on the others.

*The Recruitment of Students*

It has been urged above that the number of students in Adult Education depends upon the right appeal being made to motives sufficiently strong to induce men and women, living a busy life and with many other interests, to give up time to regular study. These motives are various, and may be roughly classified as vocational, cultural, and social, as well as others less insistent and more casual, such as curiosity aroused by some topical interest or the influence of chance acquaintance. Moreover, these are not mutually exclusive. The methods of recruiting new students probably do not call for much elaboration. They are mainly two. One is public advertisement in its various forms—a net let down into the open sea. It is a method skilfully exploited in recent years by the L.C.C. and one familiar to all Adult Education organisations. In their experience it is frequently disappointing, and they have generally got more satisfying results from the leavening work of small groups of enthusiasts. In relation to what has been called above the social motive, this method of pioneering through voluntary organisations is most successful. While, therefore, it would clearly be an advantage to the movement if the Adult Education agencies were able to make more “display” of their message, it is very doubtful whether the most modern methods of publicity could ever replace the work of the missionary group as the dynamic of adult educational progress. Few who have not worked in a voluntary organisation realise the amount of time and patience often expended by W.E.A. branches, their officers and members, to arouse the interest and win the enrolment of neighbours or workmates. You can take a horse to water, you may induce him to sip or to cool his ankles in the pool, but he will only drink if he is thirsty. The problem is how to arouse in busy men and women a thirst for understanding, or rather how to make them conscious of the relation between education and their present discontent. It is the task of an organisation with a strong sense of both educational and social realities to render this service and to arouse a sense of purpose in relation to Adult Education.

That it is possible to catch the eye of large numbers by superficially attractive programmes effectively advertised is in the modern world obvious. The temptation to diletantism, to

be satisfied with superficial explanations and ready-made solutions, is common to us all. A recent article in an American journal<sup>1</sup> is illuminating. It discusses the portent of a magazine-reading public. A single American magazine is said to have ten million readers. "When the average American wants to spend an evening improving his mind, he turns, not to his favourite poet or philosopher—he has none—but to the Readers' Digest." Another of these "monsters of magazine publishing made to order for a man in a hurry", "makes its readers feel that they are learning something about American history when they examine the beards of half a dozen patriarchs whose careers are summed up in a two-line caption. It will explain inflations with pictures of experts, generally photogenic." These phenomena, which are by no means limited to America and are characteristic of our present stage of civilisation, warn us that it is easy to be too optimistic about the readiness of men and women to stop and think in an age when everything conspires to induce superficiality. In most of what has been written in recent months about Adult Education after the war the problem of how to evoke a real interest in Adult Education has been given too little attention.

Nevertheless, it would be absurd to under-estimate the stimulus which can be got from attractive accommodation. Many will no doubt be drawn into Adult Education who have hitherto ignored its appeal, when that appeal is reinforced by the existence of "homes" for Adult Education as convenient as Vaughan College or Toynbee Hall, as well equipped as the City Literary Institute, and as beautiful as the Impington Village College.

### *Adult Teaching and the Tutor*

The place of the tutor in Adult Education is quite crucial. It is even more crucial, perhaps, than in other stages of education, since these are compulsory while here the very continuance of the student's attendance depends on whether he feels satisfied with what he is getting.

The Adult Education movement in this country has created its own traditions, and in doing so it has owed very much to a body of tutors which has included a high proportion of the

<sup>1</sup> *The New Republic*, March 6th, 1944.

best scholars and teachers in the history of English education in the last forty years. As a result it has been able to combine high standards of intellectual integrity and scholarship with social relevance and actuality to a degree which has probably not been excelled and has seldom been equalled anywhere in the world. Whether it is a Tutorial Class, a shorter and more elementary course, a study circle, or an occasional lecture, often on some topic of the day, the same high standard has been maintained—not, of course, with unvarying success, but as the recognisable mark of a single body of work. This has been achieved, not by any standardisation, but by the tradition of the movement itself—a movement which, from its inception, demanded a high standard of professional capacity from those whom it accepted as teachers and, in return, has sought to secure from the educational authorities, with some, if not with complete success, a generally high standard of professional conditions, including remuneration, for their work. Nor is this last statement invalidated by the equally significant fact that many tutors have devoted to the service of the movement and to the interests of their students many hours of unpaid work and have cheerfully accepted tasks involving long and tedious journeys, discomfort and inconvenience, as well as the sacrifice of valuable time and of their own interests. Administrators and committees unfamiliar with the work and looking on it as merely part of the whole organised educational service, have sometimes criticised the scale of payment of tutors and have applied a yardstick borrowed from other purposes. The payment of teachers in England has too often been niggardly—a fact from which we are likely to suffer severely in the next few years if it is not remedied—and probably nowhere has the tendency to do things on the cheap been more glaring than in the field of “further education”. Adult Education will certainly prove disappointing if the conditions of service of tutors are not given careful thought.

### *The Training of Tutors*

Without abating anything from the insistence already given to the importance of the influence of the movement in the making of tutors, it must be admitted that their recruitment and preparation for this special kind of work has been somewhat



haphazard. For long, the fact that the movement was a growing one, learning by experience, and far from having attained stability, meant that much reliance had to be placed on the casual tutor, taking an occasional class, or if not, at least working only part time in Adult Education. The part-time tutor will not cease to be needed—far from it. No one can foresee the exact nature and distribution of the classes from year to year; and in any case the employment of part-time tutors means much both for the movement (in the variety of experience on which it can draw) and for themselves and their other work. That English University studies and teaching have profited greatly from the experience gained in Adult Education is almost a truism; and the same holds good in relation to other fields.

The range of experience on which Adult Education has been able to draw is illustrated by the following analysis of the occupations of the seventy tutors who were engaged, in a recent session, in taking one year and terminal courses for the Yorkshire (North) W.E.A. District: University teachers (5), training college staff (2), technical college staff (2), secondary school staffs (14), elementary school staffs (8), music teachers (3); ministers of religion (4), housewives (5), munition workers (2), miner, doctor, factory inspector, accountant, civil servant, librarian, journalist, shopkeeper, newsagent, welfare workers (2), woodworking machinist, settlement wardens (2), civil defence workers (2), full-time adult tutors (3), others (6).

The tutor who is giving his whole time to this special work has, however, a particularly important contribution to make. The staff tutors engaged by some Universities have helped to shape the English tradition of Adult Education in many ways, and one of the needs of the future is an increase in their number. It is also desirable that they should take a share in the work of training new tutors. The recruitment of young tutors from the women's colleges during the war has shown what is possible where the right atmosphere exists inside the University, and the young graduate goes out to work in intimate touch with a live voluntary movement.

Schemes for the training of tutors in Adult Education have not been lacking. One University College offered a special one-year training course, though it has hardly been taken up, so far;



and in any case the more formal type of training course appropriate to the school teacher is not so suitable for adult tutors. The W.E.A. conducted for several years a useful two months' residential course at Holybrook House, Reading; and many former students, including some of the present tutors and officials of the Association, gained valuable help from it. A certain amount has been done at the Tutorial Classes Summer Schools; and some Joint Committees have enabled their staff tutors to conduct classes for the benefit of new tutors. All of these ought to be developed—especially perhaps the last. What is least likely, probably, to be helpful is a "professional" academic training course for prospective tutors, similar to the Diploma course of University Education Departments. The successful Adult Education tutor must first and foremost know the people he is going to teach. The method, adopted by the Oxford and Leeds Joint Committees, by which experienced staff tutors conduct a class for part-time tutors who are already taking classes but whose main work is in other fields and who therefore particularly need guidance in the methods of adult teaching, ensures that experience and theory go hand in hand.

Apart from such methods of elementary training, more could well be done in the way of refresher courses for experienced tutors, both pioneer and advanced. The annual conferences on teaching methods in Adult Education, arranged before the war by the W.E.A. in co-operation with the Central Joint Advisory Committee on Tutorial Classes and the Association of Tutors in Adult Education, and similar local conferences, did something in a small way; they discussed the teaching in adult classes, of Economics, International Relations, Psychology and Literature, and reports were published. Similarly, the week-end schools organised during the war by the C.J.A.C. in co-operation with the other bodies mentioned above, and with the assistance of the Board of Education, represented a valuable contribution. These gave tutors from all over England and Wales the opportunity of studying with the leading experts in the field, recent developments in the U.S.S.R., France, the U.S.A., and the Colonies. It is hoped that such "refresher courses" will become a regular feature of the movement. The World Association for Adult Education was able for some

years to offer travelling bursaries to enable tutors to study Adult Education in other countries—again a valuable service. Finally, Oxford and Cambridge have generously enabled individual tutors to spend a term in residence—a genuine refresher. All such aids have, however, been spasmodic, and it is to be hoped that the C.J.A.C. will be able to develop a more systematic scheme for enabling tutors to renew their inspiration and make contact with the best minds at work in their own field of study.

### *The Equipment of Adult Education*

Adult Education has proceeded in the past usually with the bare minimum of equipment; sometimes a blackboard and no chalk; often no blackboard at all; oftener still without maps; and, while the creation of the Central Library for Students (on the initiative of the W.E.A.) and its development into the National Central Library, has been a contribution which cannot be exaggerated, it still remains a fact that the supply of books is totally inadequate.

A full treatment of these various forms of equipment would require more space than is here available; and a few points only can be made.

### *The Library Service*

First, with regard to books—perhaps the most essential of all the tools of the adult student. As Carlyle puts it, "All that a University can do for us is still but what the first school began doing—teach us to read". Here the effective provision for Adult Education waits on the reform and development of the public library service,<sup>1</sup> which are the subject of discussion in the library world and to which the Adult Education movement should on all grounds give active support.

The adult student needs a plentiful supply of the right books<sup>2</sup>—books to read, books to consult (and convenient reference libraries), and books to buy. The revival of the cheap book, in such series as the Penguins, has been an asset to Adult Educa-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *The Public Library Service—Its post-war re-organisation and development*; also McColvin: *The Public Library System*.

<sup>2</sup> Report of Sub-Committee on the Supply of Books (Appendix IID), W.E.A. Annual Report, 1936.

tion as well as a cultural service to the nation as a whole; but in saying this we must not overlook earlier and valuable series such as Everyman, the World's Classics, and the Home University Library series, though many of these have had to go out of print during the war, while paper has been available for much less worthy objects. Nevertheless the crying need is still for a more adequate public library service which will enable the adult student to read or consult the standard works of reference and the most recent and authoritative books and other sources *at the time when he needs them*.

It is indeed impossible to overestimate the importance of a plentiful supply of good books and of attractive and well organised libraries, if the disease of sensationalism, referred to above, is not to prove fatal to all values and standards in the modern world. It is a question whether a programme of library building and of provision of books is not indeed the first requirement—even before adult education institutes—and our deficiencies in this respect are too little realised and too seldom discussed.

Apart from this there is the question of suitable "text books" (if the name is not misleading) for introductory study by adult classes. The demand for such books in certain subjects like Psychology has been voiced in the conferences of tutors mentioned above; and this again is a question which the C.J.A.C. might investigate through a special committee representing the various interests concerned.

### *Visual Aids*

Next to books, probably the greatest deficiency has been in adequate maps—both in respect of suitability and still more in accessibility. It has been known in connection with a tutors' refresher course on one of the allied countries, for the resources of a great University to be explored in vain. How much worse do the classes in remote towns or villages fare.

This difficulty might be got over quite easily if only *projection equipment* were available more generally. If the tutor could count on finding an episcope or a diascope in most schools where Adult Education classes meet, it would be much easier to find maps to illustrate particular points in history or geography, since the resources of even a well equipped school

would be unlikely to include a complete range of historical and physical wall maps.

Projection equipment is really essential too, of course, for many other purposes. Much talk is heard about the place of films in Adult Education as in education generally, and, no doubt, their potential usefulness is considerable. No visual aid is to be despised. In this field we have been woefully deficient. But for reasons, some of which have been indicated, projection equipment of the kind already mentioned may well rank as a first priority. Joint Committees and W.E.A. Districts should also have such equipment as well as a film slide lantern, and probably a cinema projector. No doubt great developments in the provision of films are to be expected when the claims of the Services on the resources of the industry are relaxed. It is still far from certain, however, that films suitable for educational needs will be produced. The educational possibilities of "documentary" films were just beginning to be explored, before the war, by the Film Unit of the G.P.O. (now the Crown Film Unit), following in the track of the Empire Marketing Board; and these and other libraries, now amalgamated in the Central Film Library have rendered a great service to voluntary and other educational bodies. Much will depend on what happens to the Ministry of Information Film Unit, which now commands some of the best talent, and on whether educational interests can get themselves heard—and not merely commercial interests.<sup>1</sup>

### *Music*

It is evident that an increased demand for Music in Adult Education is to be expected, and this leads to the consideration of further items of equipment, long overdue. It is some years since a Committee of the British Institute of Adult Education examined the possibilities of the gramophone in Adult Education. For Musical Appreciation classes it is clearly essential; but it is often by no means easy to obtain. A good Library of Records is, of course, equally important. The same is true of the piano—at any rate of a piano in adequate condition for the

<sup>1</sup> Cp. a report on Documentary and Educational Films by the Association of Cinetechnicians; also *Film*, by Roger Manvell (Pelican), and *The Films*, by S. B. Carter (W.E.A.).



purpose. It may be regarded as almost heresy, since so much has been said in recent years about the possibilities of wireless in Adult Education, but it seems to us that the first need is that gramophones and good pianos shall be available for the classes, which will enable people to enjoy good music better and thus to get more satisfaction out of their own wireless listening at home.

Incidentally, mention must be made in passing of the value of the gramophone in the study of languages.

## *Wireless*

Broadcasting is primarily a means of entertainment, instruction and culture which is now, like the Press, a part of our civilisation. It has, however, also been called in as a specific educational aid, and in this field really notable success has been achieved in the sphere of school broadcasting. The Listening Group movement among adults will no doubt continue to find its place in the wider Adult Education movement—more especially as rooms fitted with reliable sets are provided in schools, libraries, etc.—provided the service of talks for discussion can be developed without cramping restrictions. It may be suggested that the policy of the B.B.C. needs to be much more experimental—not in the detail of talks technique but in the whole handling of this side of the programme. The practice, for instance, of Holland, where Adult Education and other listeners' organisations (not commercial interests) can directly sponsor their own programmes might well be adopted. When the Canadian W.E.A. invited its British opposite number to arrange a series of "exchange talks" over the air, the policy of the B.B.C. was a barrier. Nor should it be supposed that the usefulness of the Talks programmes is limited to the Discussion Groups. To familiarise the casual listener with hearing controversial questions discussed and social problems analysed is not less important. Like most great organisations the B.B.C. is too prone to judge the value of its programmes by statistical tests.

## *Equipment for Science*

The place of science in non-vocational Adult Education is still not in proportion to its importance in modern civilisation.



Apart from Biology, which has a regular place in tutorial classes in some areas, and which—especially in relation to social biology—deserves more serious attention, little is at present done. The fault is partly with the scientists who have, till quite recently, shown too little social awareness; and the remedy may well involve an inquiry into the academic teaching of science. The British Association has shown itself aware of the problem, first in setting up a Committee on Science in Adult Education,<sup>1</sup> and more recently in the establishment of a division on the Social Relations of Science. The suggestions of the British Association for new degree courses in "Philosophy, Natural and Social," would probably go further than any other single change towards the production of a supply of tutors able to arouse interest in this subject. How far this would call for the use of laboratories and apparatus in adult classes of this type is a matter for enquiry; there is little doubt that much could be done with the aid of the film and the projector.

### *Chapter Five*

## WAR-TIME EXPERIMENTS

IT is doubtful whether any assessment of the varied activities<sup>1</sup> which have made up the war-time schemes of Adult Education is yet possible. Many of them have clearly been specifically adapted to the conditions of life in H.M. Forces, and that they are not directly transferable to the very different conditions of civilian life would probably be generally agreed. We must remind ourselves what those conditions will be. That men and women will probably undergo a revulsion of feeling against anything that recalls the highly organised, regimented life they lead in war-time is extremely probable. That they will be largely preoccupied with the private aspects of life, particularly the starting or re-establishment of a home, is certain. That the sense of national unity will give place to divisions and controversy is only to be expected. Adult Education must adapt itself to the changing conditions as it did in 1939 to the conditions of war-time.

<sup>1</sup> *Science Teaching in Adult Education*, 1933.

*Education in H.M. Forces*

That process began even before the war when on the introduction of the Militia Bill, Mr. Creech Jones, a Vice-President of the W.E.A., moved an amendment, the principle of which was accepted, for the setting up, in co-operation with the Adult Education bodies, of a scheme of education in citizenship for the Forces. After various delays, the Central Council for Adult Education in H.M. Forces was set up in 1939. It comprised representatives of all the bodies concerned in the provision of Adult Education, and some which had only a remote interest in it. Looking back on four years' activity, it can be seen that, in the main, the Central and Regional Committees have acted as a series of lecture agencies on a large scale, and that the Services have had at their call, to the extent to which they cared to make use of them, lectures on the widest range of topical and general subjects, supplemented by the provision of classes in practical subjects, languages, crafts, etc. There can be no doubt that much stimulating work has been done, often by devoted lecturers who were willing to spend hours in inconvenient travelling after a heavy war-time day in their own normal occupations. On the other hand, the quality of the work is uneven. The qualifications of some of the "full-time lecturers", for instance, are a matter for wonder. It can hardly be that some permanent impression has not been left, even though the fact that the audience at many of these lectures has been a "parade" audience warns us that the same thing is impossible in peace-time. It is difficult to assess the value of the work as a whole, but it should be remembered that there has been no objective and impartial review, and the absence of such an assessment is important. Comments on the value of what has been attempted are inevitably based on personal impressions.

Secondly, the Army Education Service, dispersed at the outset, was reconstituted and expanded, and has certainly gained from an influx of fresh blood. It is, however, occupied with many other duties besides those of Adult Education—with psychological tests, for instance, and other routine work.

Next came the introduction of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs in 1941. The work of A.B.C.A. has broadened and developed from its first experimental beginnings, and it is not

easy to summarise it briefly. The core of it is the discussion group under the leadership of a layman—an officer, not a tutor or educationist—working with a brief supplied weekly by the Bureau. The essence of A.B.C.A. is thus an adaptation of the Discussion Group method fostered by the B.B.C.—with the difference that the A.B.C.A. Group is compulsory, and the leader is not chosen by the members but is, in fact, their regimental officer, an important element in the scheme being the contribution which it can make to military morale.

A.B.C.A. hinges on the weekly pamphlet dealing with some current topic. Many of these pamphlets have been admirably written by first-rate authors; in some few a rather “jazz” technique has been deliberately adopted, which is at any rate proof of an experimental temper. Much has been done through week-end schools, provided by Regional Committees, and latterly by taking over a Residential College, to provide the officers with at least an elementary background and the beginnings of a technique—particularly the latter.

How far the experiment has succeeded cannot yet be told. It must be recognised, however, that some pitfalls were avoided. By entrusting the scheme to a civilian Director experienced in the Adult Education movement, the dangers of military control of opinion were somewhat lessened; and co-operation with the Regional Committees for Adult Education was also sound policy. Moreover, A.B.C.A. has developed the pioneer work of the British Institute of Adult Education and other bodies in the use of Exhibitions as an aid to Adult Education, and has collected and circulated some admirable photographic material, as well as printing an excellent “Map Review” series. These features of its work ought to be taken up on behalf of the civilian Adult Education movement as a whole<sup>1</sup>.

Nor should the educational work done for the Forces be allowed to lapse at the end of the war, as happened in 1919, leaving the Army Education Corps as the Cinderella of the peace-time army. In this respect, the appointment as Director-General of Army Education, of a distinguished educational administrator with first-hand knowledge of the work of the

<sup>1</sup> The Council for Education in World Citizenship, representing a wide range of educational bodies, is undertaking this task.

W.E.A. and the Universities as well as of a Local Education Authority is encouraging.

The latest phase in army education was the introduction of the "British Way and Purpose" scheme of compulsory periods of instruction in citizenship. By providing a more definite factual basis than the A.B.C.A. scheme involved, together with guidance for reading, and by seeking to find out in the army the men, as well as officers, who were competent to deal with these subjects, the British Way and Purpose scheme comes closer to traditional Adult Education. This is a scheme of compulsory education in civics in duty hours. As it is based on an authoritative syllabus, which must evidently be approved—and this obviously *may* mean "censored"—by high War Office authorities, military and perhaps political, it departs from vital principles of democratic adult education. On the other hand it corrects the somewhat excessive emphasis on discussion—not as an element in education, but as the essence of the whole process—discussion which may have very little content of information—which has appeared not only in army education but in some recent civilian tendencies too. The Director of A.B.C.A. indeed has spoken of<sup>1</sup> the "fetish of discussion"; and if the justification of this in relation to the traditional Adult Education movement is doubtful, it is not without a bearing on recent developments.

For there has undoubtedly appeared in recent years a tendency to put too high a value on the exchange of crude "opinion" and to pay too little attention to knowledge, evidence, and critical method. The vogue of "opinion surveys", of the "Brains Trust", both original and imitative, and the discussion group are all, perhaps, illustrations of this tendency. This is not to deny that the amateur "Brains Trust" for instance, as part of the programme of social organisations, youth clubs, etc., is a stimulating intellectual recreation, or that the discussion group has useful possibilities of mental stimulation. But we should be careful not to suppose that these war-time improvisations have made the older emphasis on knowledge, continuous study and good teaching out of date.

It should also be mentioned that large numbers of men and women in the Forces (and in Civil Defence) have had experi-

<sup>1</sup> *Radio Discussion Groups*, by F. E. Hill and W. E. Williams (1941).



ence of residential courses of various kinds in connection with Service training; and that "the R.A.F. and the Navy are sending men to the Universities for six-month courses", about half of which are "courses in humane studies—history, economics, philosophy, etc.—which can serve no immediate utilitarian or vocational ends".<sup>1</sup>

### *Civil Defence Education*

The feature of war-time developments of Adult Education in the Civil Defence Services has been the fact that thousands of men and women have had time on their hands during duty hours, and have welcomed the opportunity of intellectual leadership and information. The fact that the W.E.A. has been able to organise in these Services nearly a thousand classes—most of them of the pioneer type—in the last two years shows how leisure can be turned to educational use. Many of these firemen, wardens, rescue workers, etc., will, it is to be hoped, carry on their new interests into the post-war world. It would, however, be a mistake to assume too much. It is one thing to attend a lecture in the Army or a class which is organised in a fire station where there is nothing else very interesting to do, and quite another to go to such a lecture or class or to a discussion group when other claims are making themselves felt.

The Discussion Group has also made much headway in Civil Defence—there, too, success has been in proportion to the organisation of a service of trained leadership—a fact which is illustrated both in the N.F.S. in London, where this movement had its pioneers, and in Lancashire where the W.E.A. has been able to integrate the Discussion Groups, to an encouraging degree, with the more systematic provision of Adult Education.

### *Lessons of War-time Experience*

In considering the work done in H.M. Forces and elsewhere during the war in its bearing on the future, some caution is necessary. It is often rather easily assumed that much if not all of this experience is transferable to civilian conditions.

If, however, we look at this war-time experience more

<sup>1</sup> *Nature*, October 30th, 1943.

closely, certain features emerge. That it is very largely a matter of improvisation is not a criticism; it was inevitable that this should be so, and much is often learned through having to improvise. But more is involved in the fact that it is imposed on, rather than sought by, the men and women concerned. There have been two opinions about compulsory lectures and discussions in the Army. It can be argued, persuasively, that, since the whole life of the soldier is artificial and planned, the inclusion of education is not resented and may arouse an unexpected response—always provided the approach is right. But the fact remains that most of what is being done is not, in fact, optional. It has, indeed, the quality of Welfare work rather than of Adult Education. Its object, that is to say, is largely the preservation of morale, rather than the stimulation of independent and critical thought. This is not in any way to question the sincerity of many of those who are engaged in the work either within the army or as civilian collaborators. Soldiers in the past have tended, like Cæsar, to look askance at the man of independent opinions; "he thinks too much; such men are dangerous". That many in high military places to-day take a different view may be gladly recognised. But it needs little knowledge of and talk with the ordinary soldier to realise that he has not complete confidence in the advisability of expressing his mind too freely while he is in uniform; and in civilian life he would be still more distrustful of any education organised as a "welfare" provision by or in collaboration with his employers. The point is important in relation to suggestions that have recently been mooted. "Welfare" and education are not the same things; and official schemes of Adult Education can probably only show even plausible results in a totalitarian community like the Army or in a totalitarian State.

Some, indeed, of the projects for post-war Adult Education bear a strong family resemblance to the elaborate and expensive provision for "workers' leisure" which Fascist Italy developed under the title of *Dopolavoro*, or the "National Institute for the Organisation of Workers' Leisure". Thoughtful observers, indeed, have expressed concern at certain tendencies even in war-time Britain, where masses of workers have been housed in great camps, run with a kind of impersonal efficiency, fitted up with "every convenience", and

supplied with regular programmes of entertainment; where a study circle or weekly lecture desired by a minority must always give way to an E.N.S.A. show; where, in short, the principle of "bread and circuses" has been fully exploited.

Compare the revealing comment of one who is supremely well qualified to speak on the experience of extending education to a new section of the population. Writing of the first efforts of the Rugby Day Continuation School, Mr. Kitchen<sup>1</sup> says "This new learning without tears, without effort, without drudgery, without conscious work, based solely on interests induced by highlights, soon received an unexpected shock. Young people did not . . . care much for a diet largely composed of confectionery. . . . They did not care much for a time table entirely given over to interesting tasks . . . they felt vaguely that all was not well." It resembled, in their eyes, "a game of football without goal posts".

Some of the current talk about post-war Adult Education is in terms of education for other people. It has the stamp of philanthropy or benevolent paternalism which is, of course, nothing new in English life. It sometimes provokes an impatient reaction towards emphasising the right of adult men and women to live their own lives without being "done good to". The significant movements in Adult Education here and abroad have been largely spontaneous expressions of the desires of the people themselves. One cannot help feeling somewhat sceptical when taking part in a conference on Adult Education at which hardly anyone in the distinguished circle was himself educated at an elementary school, or has served in the ranks in the Forces, or worked at the bench, the mine or the plough. It cannot too often be repeated that Adult Education must have a genuinely democratic foundation; and there was never a time when this more needed saying than towards the end of a period when, in highly artificial conditions, it has been organised on a large scale from above and not from below.

<sup>1</sup> P. E. Kitchen: *From Learning to Earning*, pp. 44-6.

## *Chapter Six*

### A POLICY FOR POST-WAR ADULT EDUCATION

FOR the provision of Adult Education in the post-war period, then, what we should suggest would be a development and extension of present methods. The basis of these is close co-operation between the Board of Education, the Universities, the Local Education Authorities, and those voluntary bodies whose main purpose is educational. In attempting to indicate the scope of each of these, certain broad distinctions emerge.

#### *Informal Activities*

The most elementary forms of Adult Education will no doubt continue to be carried on very largely in extremely informal ways, by bodies such as the Co-operative Guild or the Women's Institute, the Y.M.C.A. or the Y.W.C.A. and the Adult School Movement, the oldest of all the bodies in this field. Three comments on the work of these bodies are appropriate. First, they must not be despised because they defy statistical computation or definition. Secondly, the closer their links—which, of course, already exist—with the W.E.A. and its more systematic work, the better for all concerned. Finally, any assistance which can be given to such bodies falls well within the scope of the Local Education Authority as defined anew in Clauses 41 and 42 of the Education Act. There is nothing new in this; but the precedent of the Youth Service shows possibilities of development. In administering such schemes of aid, either by providing teachers or buildings or by grants, the L.E.A. should make it its purpose to encourage the growth and vitality of the voluntary organisations concerned, and not to absorb them into its own institutions. Even the organisation of classes in handicrafts need not always be made the exclusive responsibility of the Local Education Authority; it is a gain if appropriate democratic organisations take a share of the responsibility.



*The Contribution of the Local Education Authority*

Nevertheless, the new duties imposed on Local Education Authorities by the Education Act are important. They are a challenge and provide a great opportunity.

List 113,<sup>1</sup> published by the Board of Education, shows how widely the development of Further Education by Local Education Authorities varied before the war. The total of over a million students in evening institutes and evening courses in Technical Colleges provided by Local Education Authorities under the Board's Regulations for Further Education<sup>2</sup> represented 22·2 per 1,000 of the total population; but it varied from 47·5 per 1,000 in London to 14·3 in the Administrative Counties; and though some students living in County areas would be attending courses in the County Boroughs, the percentage in all these latter amounted to little more than half the London figure. Moreover, the local variations are considerable. In the Counties, the proportion to total population varied from nothing in Huntingdonshire, and less than 5 in Herefordshire to 26·4 in the West Riding, and 30 in Cumberland; and in the County Boroughs from between 8 and 10 at Gateshead and Exeter to 40 at Oldham and Manchester; and in Bradford and Burnley at 54·4 it was actually substantially higher than in London.

It is true that the figures reflect local conditions and not merely the enterprise of the Local Education Authority. Thus the high figures in some of the textile areas no doubt reflect the demand for technical instruction and it is impossible on the figures given to draw any conclusions as to the distribution as between the adolescent and the adult, or between purely technical and cultural studies. But common experience indicates the scope of the task facing the Local Education Authorities in providing more adequately for the "social, cultural and physical" education of their citizens.

The most immediate problem concerns the adolescent. The sudden discovery of Youth in 1939 was something to provoke amazement, if not cynicism, after years of national neglect, beginning with the scrapping of the Continuation School

<sup>1</sup> List 113. The figures are for 1927-8 and appear to be the latest available.

<sup>2</sup> Board of Education Report, 1938. 45 per cent were under 18.

Clauses of the Fisher Act and continuing with the years of depression after 1932 when, instead of using idle national resources to equip youth for the future, we were content with the most perfunctory emergency measures. What is needed in the coming years is, not the organisation of a "Youth Movement", but the provision of every facility for the young folks to find themselves. The County Colleges can be a valuable foundation, especially if they are equipped so that varied interests can find expression. But no less important is the planning of accessible swimming baths in every town; playing fields in town and country; community centres available for the use and adapted to the needs of all types of organisations; grants, where needed, to youth hostels, and so on. All this social planning covers the terms "social and physical" in the definition quoted above. The cultural education of youth is more particularly the function of the County College, and it must not lose sight of its main purpose. The County College will be judged by its success in building on the educational foundations of the secondary school a bridge to cultural and civic interests in adult life; and though its methods will perforce be experimental, it must not shirk the task nor fight shy of seriousness of purpose.<sup>1</sup>

In the field of what is more strictly Adult Education, the first need which the Local Education Authority can do much to meet is for appropriate accommodation and equipment. We may hope to see buildings of the convenience and artistic quality of Impington, or the City Literary Institute, become much more common: well-designed buildings, light and airy, comfortably furnished, and well-equipped, with facilities for lecture, class, and committee meeting, as well as good libraries, projection equipment, and a canteen. In the immediate post-war years there will, it is true, be many and urgent building claims to be met. Much can be done, however, without waiting for the opportunity to materialise the Platonic idea of an Adult Education centre. The provision of a few chairs which can be used in schools, where now only unsuitable desks are available for the adult student; of projection equipment—especially, perhaps, the epidiascope; of bookcases, to replace the "book-box" as a class library—these are a few obvious sugges-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Kitchen: *From Learning to Earning*—quoted above.

tions. There are many schools in some areas with a room to spare which could be set aside as an adult class room; and such a room could be provided for even in the new temporary buildings which will be necessary in some areas in the first post-war years. Nor need the appeal of bright, cheerful and artistic decoration in old buildings, be neglected. A few pounds could often make a great difference, and it would be a poor excuse for not spending so small a sum, to say that the authority had a scheme in its archives for spending thousands some years hence.

It is to be noted that the duties of the Local Education Authorities include consultation with voluntary bodies. In some areas such consultation has long been close and helpful. In others, it is likely to reveal many ways in which the Authorities could encourage the development of Adult Education, notably by adapting its administrative requirements to the flexibility which the varied circumstances of adult students need; and by increasing grants; and often, in the experience of the W.E.A., a relatively small additional grant can make possible a substantial increase of work successfully done. It is not an unfamiliar experience for a deputation to wait on an Education Committee to plead for a grant of the order of a hundred pounds, and such memories tinge with a certain astringent flavour what is now being canvassed in some areas in the way of schemes, running into many thousands a year.

What is particularly needed is close co-operation and mutual understanding, such as has existed in some areas for a good many years. The West Riding of Yorkshire is an outstanding example; Kent is another; Cornwall is a third. These three are mentioned because they are widely separated areas, and because different *methods* of association have been worked out in each. Other examples could, of course, have been taken: that of North Staffordshire was mentioned by the Minister of Education in the debates on the Education Bill. In all these cases the crux of the matter is that there is machinery for consultation between the W.E.A., the University, and the Local Education Authority, and that the Local Education Authority is prepared to take seriously its financial responsibilities for aiding Adult Education—while recognising the importance of freedom.

In two of the areas mentioned the classes are conducted under the Adult Education Regulations; in the other two, under the Regulations for Further Education. The results probably do not differ much, because a strong W.E.A. movement is able to ensure that serious educational standards are upheld. But the right of direct responsibility for these standards which is conferred by the Adult Education Regulations is highly valued by the W.E.A., and experience shows that it is fully compatible with close co-operation with the local Authority.

Nor should the advantage be one-sided. There is an important body of educational work which must always be provided, in the main, directly by the L.E.A. It may be roughly summarised, in the terms of the Regulations for Further Education, as the type of class or course in which "instruction" is the predominant element, whereas the University and voluntary bodies lay the emphasis on the "tutorial" method, or on co-operative study. But the methods of "instruction" which are suitable with juveniles are not applicable with adults. Take as an example the problem of Languages. The Adult Education movement is sometimes criticised for neglecting this group of studies in spite of its relevance to a world of increasing intercommunication. The L.E.A.s, however, have not been particularly successful. Less than three per cent of their classes were in Languages. There seem to be problems here with regard to the selection, appointment and remuneration of teachers for adult classes, on which consultation with adult education interests could be helpful.

### *The Ministry of Education*

The Ministry of Education will not, it is hoped, disinterest itself in the provision of Adult Education because of the new functions of Local Education Authorities. The Ministry has made a unique contribution to Adult Education in England, all the more because it has had the wisdom to refrain from any attempt to dictate the policy of the movement or to impose any direction upon it, other than to satisfy itself of the competence of tutors in their own field and of the serious intention of the students. It has been both helpful and encouraging; its Regulations have been well conceived to meet the needs of students who are not working for examinations, credits or



certificates, but to enlarge their understanding of life. It has built up a partnership with universities and voluntary organisations—especially the W.E.A.—which is too valuable to lose. The Regulations might well be simplified, and war-time experience will no doubt help towards this end; but their central significance must not be overlooked. Their function is to secure autonomy, within the larger field of further education, for the voluntary body devoting its main energies to a certain type of work with serious purpose as its distinguishing quality.

### *The Universities*

The function of the University is very important in any society. It will be of vastly greater importance in post-war Britain, whose place in the world will depend not on a privileged industrial situation, but on technique, intelligence and vision. Access to the Universities must be open to all who are qualified to pursue their studies at this level. The difference between the proportion of University students to population in Scotland and Wales and that in England is striking, but the difference between Britain and America<sup>1</sup> is staggering. There will therefore be a great need for expansion of our Universities, and it is to be hoped that instead of the student population being so concentrated that out of twelve Universities and five University Colleges in England and Wales, three Universities contain sixty per cent of the students, there will be a much wider distribution of University places.

The importance of this for Adult Education is obvious. We should have rich and varied Universities, able to serve each of the main regions of the country. It is greatly to be hoped that they would carry on and develop the notable contribution which Universities have already made to Adult Education. Some points in this contribution are worth stressing. First, its connection with social movements, either unofficially in the days of the Christian Socialists and Arnold Toynbee, or more formally as in the early days of the University Extension Movement, and especially in the Tutorial Class Movement. Secondly, in the creation of the University Joint Committee for Tutorial

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Sir E. Simon: *The Development of British Universities*; also Bruce Truscot: *Redbrick University*.

Classes, Oxford, in 1908, made one of the genuinely original departures in educational history, which seems so obvious in retrospect, but which might quite easily not have been made. By accepting as an equal partner in the provision of Tutorial Classes the organisation representing the student movement, Oxford showed the way to a genuinely democratic system of Adult Education. In these days when there is so much talk of planning and "co-ordination" the importance of the Joint Committee principle should not be forgotten. As one of the Secretaries of the first Oxford Joint Committee, the late Archbishop of Canterbury said:<sup>1</sup> "The Joint Committee is the key to the whole situation. I regard its formation as most symptomatic. It is not only a most efficient instrument of our movement but . . . symbolizes, as nothing else could symbolize, the whole purpose of the W.E.A., which is to claim for working-class people their place in the whole great national heritage of educational culture." It is doubtful if in any other way the University could have secured so completely the confidence of working-class students in the education for which they were asking, and no "regional scheme", however attractively comprehensive, is likely to succeed if it fails to offer to the students the opportunity of participating equally with the teaching body in the formulation of policy and the control of educational provision. Thirdly, the particular contribution which the University is uniquely equipped to make concerns the preservation of high standards of intellectual integrity and scholarship. This is not to say, of course, that Adult Education should, or can ever be "academic" in the same sense in which internal University study can. The type of course which is best suited for the intellectual and professional training of young students is not necessarily the best possible course for those who seek light on the problems of maturity and of practical life, cultural values and social judgment. Nevertheless, certain intellectual standards should be common to all the work of the University. A modern writer has exposed what he called "the treason of the intellectuals". There could be no greater treason of the intellectuals than for a University to allow its work in any sphere to be dictated by the desire for popular success rather than by seriousness of purpose.

<sup>1</sup> W. Temple: *The Place of the W.E.A. in English Education*.

Within these conditions it should be the function of the University to make available to all those who desire it the light which knowledge and research can throw on the problems of life and society. Such groups will be of various kinds. They will include:

- (1) Professional groups which feel the need of "*refresher*" courses. The case of "Adult Education for the educated" has been convincingly presented by Sir Richard Livingstone.

In particular the Universities have a peculiar responsibility in connection with the teaching profession in all its branches. Refresher courses, ranging from vacation courses to sabbatical years, should play a much more important part in future, especially in view of the proposal to extend the teaching profession on the basis of short period training schemes. In this connection close liaison with the Local Education Authorities concerned is obviously essential.<sup>1</sup>

Another vitally important group is that of professional administrators. The Civil Service; Local Government; Industrial Management; all these are elements of great and growing social importance and responsibility. That they should have opportunities of study in full-time or part-time courses is likely to become more and more desirable. The "staff college" idea has its place; but what is here in question is the broader social and cultural studies which are necessary to counteract professional imitations.

- (2) Next, there are other *special interest groups*, such as those organised in the Association for Adult Religious Education which has been served by the Extension Department of London University.
- (3) Further, there is the public served by the *University Extension Lecture Course*. Plans were in preparation before the war to revive the popularity of this type of course, and something had already been achieved by certain Universities. What is important in this direction is that the highest standards should be preserved. The popular entertainer is

<sup>1</sup> Cp. The McNair Report on *Teachers and Youth Leaders*. It is unfortunate that the Committee was so divided that it was unable to give a clear lead on the place of the Universities in this task.

no credit to a University.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the scholar who is abreast of his subject and will take the trouble to interpret it to a thoughtful lay audience, can render a valuable service.

- (4) Last, but by no means least, there are the *Tutorial Classes* organised almost wholly by the W.E.A., and *Summer Schools* provided by the University Joint Committees chiefly for the members of those classes. The extension and development of this thorough and socially significant core of the Adult Education Movement is of not less than vital importance to the growth and enrichment of democratic life. It should never be forgotten that the achievement of the Tutorial Class Movement is due to the combination of two elements: on the one hand there is the tradition of intellectual responsibility which the Universities have preserved and contributed; on the other hand, not less important, there has been the vital connection with the main currents of social progress which has been the contribution of the W.E.A. Seeley's famous aphorism could well be adapted to Adult Education: Learning without social experience has no root; social experience without study has no sound and permanent fruit.

It appears from the above analysis that there is a large and important field of service to Adult Education awaiting the Universities. It is highly desirable that the University itself should take an active interest in this side of its work; and this involves something more than merely the creation of an extramural department conceived as a sort of public relations department, to enhance the prestige of and to "advertise" the University—an idea that has seemed to underlie some of the projects under discussion in University circles. It means that University teachers, in all faculties, should realise the significance of knowledge in its social aspect. It implies that they should appreciate the distinctive quality of the serious adult student, and the difference between the *instruction* of the undergraduate and the co-operative effort in which a thoughtful miner or steel worker with "little Latin and less Greek" but a profound experience of life, can rightly claim an equal share

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Flexner: *Universities*, for some of the pitfalls, from which we have, on the whole, been happily preserved in this country.



with the academic expert in the direction of University teaching. The urge to power is not absent from Universities; but Adult Education has owed an incalculable debt to some of the greatest University teachers whose humility and fineness of spirit has enabled them to transcend the limitations (to venture a paradox) of a high education and to derive their extramural authority not from status but from service.

### *Voluntary Organisations*

The part to be played by voluntary organisations has been well stated in the Report, already quoted, on "Adult Education and the L.E.A." The principal voluntary body in the field is, of course, the W.E.A. It has not only been responsible, directly and in partnership with the Universities, for over eighty per cent of all courses recognised by the Board of Education under its Adult Education Regulations, and for a considerable proportion of comparable work in connection with Local Education Authorities under the Regulations for Further Education; but it is the most representative body making Adult Education its primary function. With over 770 local branches to organise the work and with a democratic constitution culminating in an Annual Conference which it would not be unreasonable to call a "Parliament of Adult Education", it is uniquely qualified to represent student opinion; and its authority is strengthened by the affiliation of eighty national societies, including the Trades Union Congress; the Co-operative Union; the Working Men's Club and Institute Union; over forty Trade Unions, with a membership of four millions; almost the whole of the organised teaching profession; and many other social and educational bodies. The special contribution which the Association can make is dealt with more fully below.

The W.E.A., however, makes no claim to cover the whole field of Adult Education. It recognises that, as mentioned above, there will always be a wide range of studies—some vocational or semi-vocational, some representing purely personal interests, some semi-recreational—which ought to be available and which, generally speaking, can best be provided by the L.E.A., through Institutes, perhaps, like the Men's and Women's Institutes of London, or indirectly through other voluntary bodies like the Women's Institutes in the countryside.

The Trade Union Movement has a long history of leaders who realised the importance of education for their purpose. In our own time the Trades Union Congress was one of the organisations responsible for the foundation of the W.E.A. and has repeatedly used its influence to develop Adult Education.<sup>1</sup> It carries out educational work for the Trade Union Movement, including an annual Summer School; and also collaborates with Ruskin College, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge (in the selection of candidates for full-time scholarships), and the W.E.A. and the National Council of Labour Colleges. Of some 250 Unions affiliated, or eligible for affiliation to Congress (the latter being the Civil Service Unions excluded by the 1927 Act), 44 are affiliated to the W.E.A. and the Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee. Other Unions are affiliated to the National Council of Labour Colleges, and some to both. Several Unions also conduct their own educational work to equip their members with a knowledge of the Union's problems and organisation. The T.U.C. is understood to be making plans for an important development of its work for the training of trade union officers.

It cannot be said, however, that British Trade Unionism as yet takes Education anything like seriously enough. In Denmark the Unions centrally and locally finance the W.E.A. and its local Committees by allocations up to 1½d. per member, and the situation in other Scandinavian countries is similar. There is need too, for close consultation between the Trade Union Movement and the educational bodies as to the most effective ways by which a sense of the importance of education for their members can be aroused.

### *The Arts*

There is also another field which has lately received more attention—the cultural study of Music and Art. Pioneer efforts in these fields before the war have been greatly stimulated by the creation in 1939 of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts. Similarly, the foundation of the National Council of Music in Wales some twenty years ago put the study of music on a new footing in that country. It is to

<sup>1</sup> Cp. *Educational Reconstruction*—a Memorandum by the Trades Union Congress.

be hoped that the work of C.E.M.A. and other bodies will now be taken over by a more representative Council, through which local societies interested in Music and Art can find expression, as well as organisations representing lay educational experience such as the W.E.A.<sup>1</sup> which can co-operate in the provision of classes in appreciation as well as in the organisation of the concerts and exhibitions in which C.E.M.A. specialises. In some Districts the W.E.A. has a musical tradition and has co-operated with C.E.M.A. On the Art side its co-operation has, perhaps, been less sought. If the worker in industrial England has little understanding of Art, his environment is largely to blame. But his interest will not be aroused if his co-operation is not sought.

In Adult Education in the Arts no less than in social studies, the voice of the student should be heard. This is urged not merely because the organisation should be saved from the domination of cliques and coteries, but for a profounder reason. As has been suggested above, the place of the Arts in Adult Education, apart from the interest of that minority which will always desire to cultivate these studies for their own sake, depends on how far they can be brought into living relation with the lives of the ordinary men and women. The divorce of Art from life is a symptom of the fundamental disease of our modern industrial society, with its social divisions and its separation of work and leisure. What is needed is a vigorous growth of interest in the Arts as a symbol of wholeness and health in society itself. The replanning of town and country; sane and healthy building for the homes of the people; noble architecture as an expression of public life; the marriage of imagination with practical life in a new and vivid synthesis; beauty and form as an integral part of the life of men and women from infancy onwards and not merely as a decorative privilege of wealth. These are some of the aims which should inspire a policy for the Arts, and should be reflected in any organisation for this side of Adult Education.

That such a programme can be provided on a democratic basis has been shown in the achievement of the "People's Parks" of Sweden, under the auspices of the Trade Union,

<sup>1</sup> (The W.E.A. is already statutorily represented on the Council which deals with the education of the architect.)

Social Democratic, and Co-operative Movements, and the W.E.A. "A Central People's Park Organisation" was created in 1905. "It advises on the creation and maintenance of the parks. It assists in provisioning them. Above all, it directs the popular theatre movement, which in 1937 had a total attendance of four millions as against 30,000 some thirty years before. In 1938 thirty theatrical companies, composed of 800 actors and actresses, among them some of the best artistes in Sweden, toured these "Folk Parks". The greatest works of ancient and modern drama, foreign and Swedish, are performed there. The municipalities have begun to contribute, and in 1931 the State made a first modest allocation, which has since been doubled. Adult Education in Sweden may therefore be said to exercise a broadening and decidedly civilising influence on popular interests and taste. This is the real basis of that development in architecture and in industrial and artistic design which impressed foreign observers in the Swedish sections of the Paris exhibitions of 1925 and 1937. A small nation like the Swedish, with the comparatively modest wealth of a tiny section of the people, could not develop artistic taste merely to suit the fads of a chosen few. The co-operative stores spread all over Sweden, the offices of the trade unions, the hospitals, and the housing schemes show that artistic Sweden is the outcome of the cultural endeavour of the Swedish people as a whole. The rise of Adult Education shows that such fruits are not due to any innate gifts of the Swedish people, but to the conscious endeavour of the driving forces of the new Sweden."<sup>1</sup>

In all this education of the consumer, the Co-operative Movement has played a great part, and it may be suggested that there is a wonderful opportunity facing the oldest and greatest Co-operative Movement in the world—that of Great Britain—in this field. It would be a mistake to suppose that an officially sponsored committee like the C.E.M.A. is the only agency through which such a task can be fulfilled.

#### *Other Agencies*

There have been indications that some firms have become interested in the development of Adult Education for their em-

<sup>1</sup> Braatoy: *The New Sweden*. .



ployees, as an extension of welfare services. It is more than doubtful if this approach would be welcomed by the workers. Their feeling is expressed in a sardonic comment on a firm's annual cricket match, in a popular novel. "The firm of Brotherhood believed in ideal conditions for their staff. It was their pet form of practical christianity: in addition to which, it looked well in their advertising literature and was a formidable weapon against the trade unions. Not, of course, that Brotherhood's had the slightest objection to trade unions as such. They had merely discovered 'comfortable and well fed people are constitutionally disinclined for united action of any sort'."<sup>1</sup> In any case, if Adult Education is to contribute, as it certainly should, to the development of a virile citizenship, it is important that it should be set in the focus of civic and social responsibility. This means that the worker should be enabled to relate his own industry to the larger interests of society by mixing in study and discussion with those engaged in other activities. Industry developed on anti-social lines in the nineteenth century, caring only about its own affairs and ignoring the larger community of which it was a part; hence the appalling urban conditions which have still to be cleared up. It would be anti-social, though in a different degree, if enlightened industrial leaders set out to-day to make the works the microcosm of the worker's life, cultural and social as well as economic, and thus helped to impoverish the wider society. The fact that this has been done, in one or two cases, on the lines of "model" townships, does not invalidate the argument. Adult Education should bring together those with common interests from the widest possible field, not merely those who work together, and should do so under conditions where there can be no question of freedom of speech and initiative being menaced.

### *The Scandinavian Model*

Although England has led the world in important aspects of Adult Education, it is a healthy tendency of self-criticism which has focussed attention recently on the achievements of certain other countries, notably those of Scandinavia. The record of the Folk High Schools in Denmark has been ex-

<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Sayers, *Murder Must Advertise*.

pounded in several recent books. They succeeded where the evening schools had failed. The statutory provision for evening schools dates back to 1814, the year of the first Danish compulsory education Act; but in 1928 there were only some "20,000 adolescents and adults attending evening schools each year—sitting at the hard uncomfortable children's desks in the elementary schoolrooms".<sup>1</sup> In England, in proportion to the population, there were nearly four times the number.

The rural youth in Denmark turned to the Folk High Schools, which appealed to them with nothing less than a gospel of community education. The significance of their achievement which does not seem to have been sufficiently remarked—so confused is much of the discussion of Adult Education—is that they attracted the *young adult*; and the question arises how they will be affected by the new development—proposed by Denmark<sup>2</sup> as well as Britain—of continuation schools or "County Colleges".

What is not so generally realised is that the leadership in Adult Education in Scandinavia has been passing to newer forces. That the urban workers were not responsive has often been deplored by the leaders of the High Schools. It was with the foundation in 1924 of the Workers' Educational Association (A.O.F.), on lines suggested by English and Swedish experience, that the successful approach to them came. With its residential high schools, its study circles, and lectures in town and country, its propaganda for more and better libraries, and its close links with similar movements in the other Scandinavian countries, the A.O.F. makes a powerful appeal to the progressive elements in the community. Even among the rural population there seems to have been some decline in recent years in the influence of the Grundtvig High Schools.<sup>3</sup>

In Sweden, too, the nineteenth century movements—including the Folk High Schools,<sup>4</sup> copied from Denmark,—have

<sup>1</sup> *Education in Denmark*, ed. Boje and Borup.

<sup>2</sup> Christmas Møller, *Education for Freedom*.

<sup>3</sup> Cp. figures given by Maxwell Garnett, *The World we Mean to Make*, p. 114, Danish Folk High Schools—

1903-4	66 schools	6,337 students
1938	57 "	5,802 "

<sup>4</sup> Forster: *School for Life* (Faber) describes the Swedish Folk High Schools.

developed on new lines in keeping with the democratic political and social evolution of the last quarter of a century. The lesson which Sweden has to teach seems to be how a "comprehensive national movement" can be built up on thoroughly democratic lines, and a rather lengthy quotation may be justified by the interest of the subject, on which all who have been privileged to see it at first hand will be agreed. In an absorbing chapter on Education for Citizenship in his excellent little book.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Bjarne Braatoy describes how "on a broader scale than in politics proper the new generations of Sweden's farming population, temperate lower middle classes and working classes, therefore, prepared a mutual understanding which fructified in the joint struggle of the two latter groups for Sweden's democratic revolution of 1917-19 and of the farmers and workers for the economic revolution which commenced in 1932".

"The folk high school movement in Sweden", he continues, "was the specific farmers' movement for adult education and has remained their domain. The education work of the temperance movement was organised nationally in 1901, whereas the workers' adult education did not achieve a national organisation till 1912. After the World War they worked separately. But the eclipse of the Liberal Party as a decisive movement in national politics eased the path of the temperance movement towards the educational organisations of the Labour Movement. They established mutually interchangeable lists of lecturers, and collaborated in other ways as well. Then the new deal of 1932-36 broke down the barriers between workers and farmers. The economic crisis did its share of that work by inducing unemployed working-class youth to seek the folk high schools. During 1936 the Workers' Educational Association joined hands with the Educational Associations of the two major temperance organisations of Sweden, with the Educational Association of the Swedish Countryside and with the Federation of Swedish Farmers' Youth in the "Collaborating Educational Associations of Sweden", which held their first annual joint meeting on January 17th, 1937. Finally the barriers between these movements for popular education and the adult education movements of the religious denominations

<sup>1</sup> *The New Sweden* (Nelson's Discussion Books).

broke down. The Christian Education Federation of Sweden joined the group in 1937, and the "Blue Ribbon Association of Sweden" has applied for admission.

"The centre of administration is the Workers' Educational Association, which also forms a link with the extensive educational work of the Co-operative Union of Sweden. It may therefore be said that adult education in Sweden is a truly comprehensive national movement. The object is not to inculcate beliefs and opinions, nor even 'hard facts'. The keynote is to be found in the method of approach. No unification, no 'Gleichschaltung', is either attempted or achieved. The student is given the equipment with which he can form opinions of his own and test them.

"The subjects covered by adult education show, moreover, that politics do not monopolize adult education. Music, general history, ethics, philosophy, psychology, hygiene, nutrition, physical education, navigation, literature, the history of art, foreign languages, and special subjects natural to the different organisations compete with the political subjects proper in Swedish adult education." "Sweden is governed", Mr. Braatoy adds, "by people associated with Adult Education."

### *Residential Adult Education*

The case for residential Adult Education has been powerfully presented by Sir Richard Livingstone and does not need to be elaborated at great length. Comparisons, however, with what has been achieved in other countries may easily be deceptive.

The conditions differ widely and the actual nature of what is being done in other countries is often misunderstood. Thus Lord Samuel, speaking in the Debate on the White Paper, referred to the "admirable example" of the Danish High Schools, and went on to say "they give residential courses, though only for a few months, at University standards, to a very large part of the population". It is no reflection on what all agree to be the admirable work of the Scandinavian People's High Schools, to say that not only do they not provide education at University standards, but that their purpose is something quite different.

In Great Britain the residential system, in its full sense, has



existed in the shape of some nine or ten colleges, of which Ruskin, with 45 years' service, has perhaps the most significant record of achievement; together with the contribution of the Universities, which admitted some half dozen or so adult students annually.

Since some of the discussions on this matter do not always clearly distinguish between a College and a short course, it should be mentioned that there is another tradition, that of the short residential course, represented by the Summer School movement, both in recognised Adult Education schools; in schools run by the T.U.C., the Co-operative Movement, and by political and other propagandist bodies, such as the Fabian Society and the Liberal Party, Ashridge College, and the National Council of Labour Colleges, and the League of Nations Union; and in the "refresher" courses for teachers provided by the Board of Education, the Local Education Authorities, and voluntary bodies like the Nursery School Association.

More recently, in a pioneer effort at the Lamb Guild House, Manchester University has perhaps pointed the way to a series of centres for week-end schools which would be a valuable adjunct of the Adult Education movement.<sup>1</sup> Some Local Education Authorities are contemplating such centres, and an admirable pamphlet<sup>2</sup> issued by the Essex Education Committee illustrates what is being planned. If the educational aim of these projects appears as yet to need more thought, and if the distinction between a residential college and a holiday course is not always firmly drawn, it remains true that centres like these are to be warmly welcomed.

There are many problems in connection with any large scale expansion of residential colleges. The provision of buildings is probably the least of these. It is necessary that the aim of any such college should be clearly defined, and it is not apparent that the necessary thinking has yet been done on this subject. It must be remembered that the much discussed Folk High Schools have an educational tradition, clear aims, and some-

<sup>1</sup> The programme of the Lamb Guild House for three months in the summer of 1944 shows thirteen week-ends arranged: four by W.E.A. branches, four W.E.T.U.C. week-end schools, one by the W.E.A. for Youth organisations, three for H.M. Forces under the Regional Committee, and one for the annual meeting of the Guildhouse.

<sup>2</sup> *Residential Adult Education.*

thing like a social philosophy. They are not afraid to demand continuous mental application from their students, as the time-table of a single day of their five months' course is sufficient to show. The existing residential colleges in Britain recognised by the Board of Education have suffered from the casual nature of the recruitment inevitable in the conditions of the inter-war period. If Residential Colleges for adult students are to succeed it must be possible for those who desire to go to them to be able to get away from their job without facing the prospect of returning at the end of the course to join the ranks of the unemployed. "The chief difficulty", said Miss Street, the first Principal of Hillcroft, in evidence to the Adult Education Committee,<sup>1</sup> "in persuading students to come to the College was the spectre of unemployment". In other words, full employment has an important bearing on this question. Granted such an assumption, it is desirable that experiments should be made with Centres where short courses of various types could be provided, and that the provision of Colleges for more continuous study should be made as the demand grows. For admission to such Colleges, previous study in W.E.A. or similar classes is highly desirable. A review of the provision for residential education by an authoritative committee fully representative of the Adult Education Movement, would be a suitable prelude to the establishment of new Colleges.

It is worth mentioning that in Sweden the State makes grants to the Folk High Schools totalling a considerable sum every year, as well as grants for bursaries, and the County Councils make grants approximately equal to those of the State, as well as grants from time to time for new buildings. The State grants are used for teachers' salaries, and the County Councils' grants for running expenses. Many of these schools are owned by County Councils, but are made available to the Board of the Folk High School on terms providing for the maximum amount of freedom.<sup>2</sup>

In Sweden, as in Denmark, the significant features of this

<sup>1</sup> *Full-time studies*. Paper No. 7 of the Adult Education Committee (H.M.S.O. 1927).

<sup>2</sup> F. Margaret Forster: *School for Life*, gives a good short account of the Swedish High Schools.

movement for residential adult education seem to be two. First, there is the strong voluntary element. In Denmark the Folk High Schools are privately owned, and aided by State grants, and the teachers identify themselves and their way of life with those they serve. In Sweden, even when actually owned by local authorities, they are often administered by voluntary bodies or representative boards. Secondly, there is the purposive element, particularly in Denmark. The students, as in all adult education movements which have had any vitality, go to them not *merely* because they offer instruction, learning or culture, but because they enshrine a view of life; because with the greatest freedom of expression and enquiry, they nevertheless stand for some recognisable social as well as personal values. They are rooted in Danish democracy.

The approach in this country could not be the same. The attempts to acclimatize the Danish system here have been made under auspices—notably Quaker leadership—peculiarly sympathetic to the Grundtvig outlook. They have done valuable work but it cannot be said that they have as yet flourished strongly in our soil. The time may well be ripe for new experiments. But the principles defined above must not be overlooked.

### Chapter Seven

## THE PLACE OF THE W.E.A.

THE contribution which the W.E.A. has made to Adult Education in the past forty years can be summarized briefly as follows. First it gave *the initial impetus to the development of Adult Education, and particularly of workers' education, on new and socially significant lines*. That impetus affected not only those who joined the Association but many of those too who rejected it; and it extended beyond this country to the Dominions and Scandinavia. Secondly, it worked out a technique of *co-operation between the adult student body and universities on the one hand, and public educational authorities on the other*, which has stood the test of time and lost nothing of its value. The Joint Committee system, giving equal weight

to the principle of sound scholarship and to that of democratic control, has established the Tutorial Class in a strong position as a uniquely significant educational agency; while the system by which the public education authorities recognise as a responsible body an organisation firmly based on hundreds of branches on the one hand and on the support of most of the great national social and educational organisations on the other, has given the movement a measure of democratic responsibility which could not easily have been attained in any other way. Thirdly, the W.E.A. has been *an active pioneer*, bringing into the range of Adult Education, first working men; then women; then extending its work from the industrial districts to the villages; later, adapting its methods to the needs of enquiring Youth, seeking ever to serve particular groups, such as the war workers in Civil Defence or in the new and isolated factories; and not forgetting the international connections of the labour movement, in peace or in war. Fourthly, and in some ways most important, there are *the educational principles which the Association has done so much to establish*. The right to discuss controversial questions, with freedom of expression for both tutor and students, in an educational course supported from public funds, is essential to a healthy democracy; but it is not something which has always been recognised. It has had to be won and defended; and it would be a mistake to imagine that it will never again be challenged.

Adult Education is viewed, naturally, according to the social philosophy of the particular critic. To one school, it must be purposive, in the sense of being dogmatic. The advocates of this view are to be found both on the right and on the left. They wish to see a body of doctrine, a national or party programme, made the basis of the work. They identify education with propaganda and are scornful of those who see it otherwise. Another school would make Adult Education "liberal" in the sense that "all ideas are born free and equal" and all studies equally relevant, their value being derived from individual and personal interest. For these the problem of Adult Education is a relatively simple and perhaps mainly an administrative problem: it is to provide as wide and varied a programme of educational activities as possible, make it widely known, and invite all to take their choice.



The experience of the W.E.A. suggests that this second view is as misleading as the first is erroneous. There are, it is true, many interests which men and women desire to pursue from time to time, but the fate of popular lecture societies and other agencies which set out to meet these broad cultural interests does not suggest that any easy solution of the problem of Adult Education is to be found on these lines.

What is required from Adult Education in a modern democratic society is something different from personal culture on the one hand and political propaganda on the other, though it has a bearing on both. True culture, on the one hand, must have social roots if it is to be more than a hothouse plant. Political achievement, on the other hand, calls for something more than the acceptance or the dissemination of a particular gospel, however necessary that may be. No society, nation, group or party, can in the long run avoid stagnation and frustration unless many of its members are ready to think out for themselves the implications of their citizenship or membership. The spoon feeding of the ordinary man is a temptation to which officials, on the one hand, and some party enthusiasts, on the other, are all too liable. In the words of the negro preacher, the Lord expects us to figure out a few things for ourselves.

Democracy implies the formation of social judgment on the basis of informed discussion. It requires that men and women shall decide on particular issues, not as a result of passing moods or casual opinions, but in the light of a philosophy of life. Such a philosophy, if it is to be anything more than the repetition of slogans, must be formed as the result of much reflection on the problems of social organisation in general and on the aims and purposes of society. Knowledge is essential; but it must be mixed with experience; and the pooling and comparison of experience in the light of new knowledge, in a group of people with common interests but bringing varied contributions drawn from daily life, is the essence of democratic Adult Education. Education thus becomes the greatest corrective both of cynicism—the poison of democracy—and of narrowness of vision.

How, to take an example, is the young trade unionist to come to grips with the administrative, organisational and

industrial issues that confront modern trade unionism? The trade union branch provides a very narrow field of experience, it is choked with minutiae and routine processes. The broad aspects of questions rarely emerge. The atmosphere of careful and critical discussion is rarely achieved. The wider perspective of trade unionism cannot be seen, and the qualities of mind necessary to visualise these wider issues become atrophied for lack of stimuli. The new range of trade union action, the new responsibilities trade unions undertake, the possibilities of developing systematically towards a higher status, all call for a genuine educational process, and an atmosphere specifically formed for critical study. What a world trade unionism has to gain from well-planned support of educational work that will spread vision, power, articulateness and sound judgment amongst its members.

The Englishman has been one of the chief architects of democracy in the modern world. Yet he is in some ways handicapped by his national heritage, which has, like all such, the weakness of its strength. Puritanism, though to it we owe much for its tradition of discussion, has given him a vein of moralism which makes him often somewhat impatient of theoretical enquiry. The Industrial Age, again, has reinforced the "practical" bent of his nature. Yet the great need of a democracy is for men who are prepared to think out problems, to look ahead, to weigh issues, and to base political action on something more than mere expediency. If we are to mould a society which will make the good life possible not for a few but for all, it will hardly be achieved unless there is a widespread readiness for the open minded but critical study both of the past and of the present.

It is on such aspects of our present situation as these that the W.E.A. places particular emphasis. It appeals primarily to men and women whose intellectual interests have been aroused or quickened by membership of social organisations or by a realisation of social problems to be solved. Its interests are thus political, in the widest sense of the term. It claims no patent rights in the methods of adult study which it has evolved. On the other hand, it offers to serve all those whose interest in these matters has been or is being awakened. It may, perhaps, be pardoned for thinking that there is a special

significance for democracy in the existence and success of an organisation bringing together in a community of learning and enquiry the largest possible number of men and women drawn from a wide field. At the same time it is, as it always has been, ready, and indeed eager, to render the service for which its experience equips it to other organisations.

In short, the contribution which the W.E.A. can make to democratic Adult Education is fourfold. It can, and does, organise as students those who have the desire and interest, whether they are ready for continuous serious study or are at the stage of beginning to be ready for more elementary efforts. Secondly, it is qualified to represent the views of adult students to official bodies, and to share with these the educational responsibilities involved. Thirdly, it can help to interpret new studies to the ordinary man and woman. Much remains to be done to bring subjects such as Science and some of the Arts within the range of the worker and the layman; and for most, it seems clear, this must be done through the interpretation of their social aspects and implications. Finally, the W.E.A. looks forward to greater opportunities of extended service outside its own borders, by bringing to other organisations, in occasional lectures and schools, and in other ways, something of the spirit of adventurous and constructive enquiry which animates its own membership. It would be a profound mistake to assess the contribution of such a vital expression of democracy in education solely in terms of statistics.

The opportunities for Adult Education, then, must be varied and flexible. While the public education authorities should accept the responsibility of ensuring that all needs are met, they should also recognise that different needs can best be met in different ways. They should not seek to officialise every conceivable educational agency, but should recognise that many will demand the right to form their own groups, sometimes, in a free country, pursuing their interests in very unorthodox directions. They should realise that not all forms of educative social activity can be brought within even the most far flung net of official statistics. On the other hand, it should be a matter of deliberate policy to encourage self-government in Adult Education. Finally, the continued success of a democratic Association devoting its whole attention to Adult Education is

of special value at a time like the present, when vast issues of social change and international reconstruction are looming ahead, and when we are entering on a period which may well baffle and perplex the most discerning. At such a time it may be tempting to set up a State agency for Adult Education—central or local—and to claim that, with unrivalled resources, such an agency can meet all needs. It requires, perhaps, both faith and insight to realise that the health of democracy cannot be preserved by the most scientifically correct intellectual diet. It needs exercise as well as food; and there is no department of social life in which freedom to exercise his faculties in association with those with common interests is more important for the citizen than that of Adult Education.

## CONCLUSION

THE achievements of Adult Education in England and Wales are not to be despised. They have their roots deep in our national life, with its wealth of social organisations, its democratic tradition and its elements of divine discontent.

The British Adult Education movement, as the White Paper on Colonial Education<sup>1</sup> puts it, shows "most of those features which . . . should characterise a mass education movement. It is essentially a movement of the people themselves, and it maintains a healthy independence of Government control while taking advantage of many of the State services." The teachers "are men and women who often give their time voluntarily, and who never receive more than small salaries, though they are often highly qualified and sometimes distinguished in the academic world. There are many agencies co-ordinated in or co-operating with the Adult Education movement, which regard juveniles and adolescents as within its field through the many forms of Youth service. What the Adult Education movement has contributed to British life and thought in the political, economic, social and intellectual spheres can be studied in the history of its activities in the last thirty years". It shows, as the Report concludes, "how a people can educate themselves to acquire a mature conception of citizenship".

<sup>1</sup> *Mass Education in the Colonies* (H.M.S.O.)



## CONCLUSION

But pride in achievement must not lapse into complacency. Much remains to be done to spread more widely the influence of the movement and to equip it for more efficient service. If, as a nation, we were to be faced once again with a period of frustration such as followed the events of 1926 and 1931, it is certain that no amount of public expenditure or exertion would create a really healthy and significant body of work in this field. If, on the other hand, we were likely to be faced with a period of easy living, the chances might be even more discouraging. But our lot is likely, we may hope, to be cast somewhere well between despair and luxury. Great tasks challenge the new generation; a world has to be remade; ways that have led to disaster have to be retraced; new motives have to be called upon to match the challenge of a new age. We have moved into a larger and a smaller world: smaller, in that time and space have been conquered; larger, in that the horizons of our personal lives can never again be so narrow as they were; and we cannot afford to ignore the existence of little countries of which we know nothing.

The adventure of social and international reconstruction is one in which those who have learnt to see must lead. But there is every reason to hope that the number of those who wish to understand and to know will increase rapidly—once the conviction gains ground that humanity is indeed on the march and that the “century of the common man” is really about to dawn. We must not seek, by offering varied forms of mental relaxation, to lull men into a new torpor. Adult Education must invite men and women to join in the adventure and to enter into their heritage. To do so it must itself be a movement of the people, not only speaking their language but genuinely sharing their aspirations and helping them towards their goal.

## APPENDIX

### THE PRESENT PROVISION FOR ADULT EDUCATION

**A**N exhaustive survey would be beyond the scope of the present work, and the following is intended only to indicate the range of interested bodies and the activities covered. It represents, with a few exceptions, the general situation before the war.

The provision for Adult Education for the future, in so far as it is assisted from public funds, will be made under Section 41-42 and 100 of the Education Act, 1944, which provides that every Local Education Authority must prepare a scheme for Further Education and shall consult the Universities and Educational Associations concerned; and that the Minister may make grants to "persons other than local education authorities in respect of expenditure incurred . . . for the purposes of educational services provided for them or on their behalf or under their management".

*The Ministry of Education* aids the provision of Adult Education in two main ways—by grants to Universities and recognised voluntary bodies under the Adult Education Regulations, and by grants to Local Education Authorities under the Regulations for Further Education.

In Scotland, under the Adult Education Regulations of the Scottish Education Department (1934) the Local Education Authorities are the responsible bodies and some of the main characteristics of the work in England and Wales have not developed. Thus the Tutorial Class is virtually unknown and classes in social studies are less developed.

*The existing Adult Education Regulations* were issued first in 1924. They were reissued in 1938, and Amending Regulations on matters of detail have since appeared. They provide for grants up to a maximum of 75 per cent of the *teaching* cost of classes provided for the liberal education of persons over 18.

- (a) by Universities, under Chapter II, which deals with University Tutorial Classes and University Extension Courses; and
- (b) by approved Associations (or in exceptional cases by a University) under Chapter III, dealing with One Year, Terminal and Short Terminal Classes.

# APPENDIX

There is also provision for

- (c) Vacation Courses under both Chapter II and Chapter III;
- (d) inclusive grants for the employment of a limited number of tutors by Universities (Article XI);
- (e) grants to recognised Residential Colleges.

Under these Regulations in 1938 a total of 3,004 Classes were provided for 56,712 students, as follows. (This does not include some hundreds of classes organised by the W.E.A. under the auspices of Local Education Authorities.)

Responsible Bodies	Types of Classes	No. of Classes	No. of Students
22 Universities and University Colleges (including the four Welsh University Colleges)	Advanced Tutorial	22	263
	Three Year Tutorial	761	12,698
	Preparatory Tutorial	99	1,992
	University Extension	453	9,446
	One Year	97	1,814
	Terminal	157	3,092
	Short Terminal	28	594
Total		1,617	29,899

Approved Associations	One Year		Terminal		Short Terminal	
	Classes	Students	Classes	Students	Classes	Students
W.E.A. . . . .	315	5,977	687	13,802	16	296
Educational Settlements Association	15	239	16	267		
National Industrial Alliance . . . .	8	146	1	16		
*Cornwall Adult Education Joint Comtee.	3	68	26	595	2	35
*N. & E. Yorks & N. Lindsay Adult Education Jt. Committee	34	617	117	2,201	1	24
National Council of Music(Univ.of Wales)	13	213	29	457		
Y.M.C.A. (Welsh National Council) . .					100	1,804
Miscellaneous . .	4	56				
Total . . . .	392	7,316	876	17,338	119	2,159

\* These are administrative Committees representing the University, the W.E.A. and the Local Education Authority, and, in the case of the E. Yorkshire Committee, certain other bodies.

# APPENDIX

Thirty-three Tutors were recognised under Article XI. The maximum number of such appointments has been increased during the war to 70. In addition, staff Tutors appointed by University Joint Committees or by W.E.A. Districts were engaged in this work.

96 per cent of the Tutorial Classes, and 81 per cent of all the classes under the Adult Education Regulations were organised or promoted by or in association with the W.E.A.

About half the students in classes organised by the W.E.A. were women. The subjects in 1938-39 (including Scotland) were classified as follows:—

Subjects	Total	Per cent of Total
<b>SOCIAL SCIENCES:</b>		
General History (including local and European)	266	8·27
Economic, Social and Industrial History .. ..	119	3·70
Economics .. .. .	200	6·20
Political and Social Science .. .. .	207	6·44
International Relations (including European and World Problems) .. .. .	590	18·33
Geography (including Economic Geography) ..	58	1·80
Anthropology and Human Geography .. ..	27	·84
Local and Central Government .. .. .	98	3·04
Psychology .. .. .	314	9·76
<b>PHILOSOPHY, SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS</b> ..	130	4·03
Religious History and Literature .. .. .	58	1·80
<b>SCIENCE: General</b> .. .. .	126	3·92
Biology .. .. .	100	3·10
<b>LITERATURE AND ARTS:</b>		
Literature and Drama .. .. .	477	14·89
Elocution and Dramatic Art and Public Speaking	76	2·36
Music, and Appreciation of .. .. .	179	5·56
Art, and Appreciation of .. .. .	48	1·49
<b>LANGUAGES (including Esperanto)</b> .. .. .	63	1·96
<b>HOME NURSING, FIRST AID AND HYGIENE</b> .. ..	19	·51
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b> .. .. .	64	1·99
<b>Total</b> .. .. .	<b>3,219</b>	<b>100</b>

*The Workers' Educational Association* is a national Association with 770 Branches, and 2,363 national and local affiliated



societies, having Adult Education as its main purpose. In the year 1938-39 it organised in all 3,511 Classes and Short Courses (most of which were recognised under the Adult Education Regulations or by Local Education Authorities), with 66,570 students. These included Tutorial Classes lasting three sessions, One Year and Terminal Courses, and a few Short Terminal Classes of six meetings. In 1943-44 the total had risen to 4,418 Classes with 80,720 students, the increase being mainly in the shorter and more popular types of course, including classes arranged for Civil Defence and other war workers. The W.E.A. also, in association with the Universities, organizes Summer Schools (see below).

In addition, the W.E.A. organised in 1938-9, 24 Week-end Schools and 319 One-day Schools, with about 24,000 students; and the public lectures, educational conferences, exhibitions, visits, etc., organised by its branches in a normal year runs into thousands.

The work of a W.E.A. Branch is varied. A few examples (1942-3) will illustrate its range.

*Croydon:*

*Members:* 194.

*Classes:* 1 Sessional, 17 Terminal.

*Subjects:* Economics; Sociology (2), History (2), International Affairs, Psychology (3), Appreciation of Music (4), Literature (4), Social Survey.

*Lecture Courses* on the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R., in co-operation with the local N.U.T. Association; average attendance—70.

*Other activities:* Play Readings and Musical Evenings (weekly); Musical Garden Party; Theatre Parties (Shakespeare, Congreve, etc.); Rambles; Book Collection for Prisoners of War.

*Leeds:*

*Members:* 277; *Affiliated Societies:* 46.

*Classes:* 19 (8 Tutorial, 2 Sessional, 6 One-Year, 3 Terminal).

*Students:* 310.  
*One-Day Schools:* 2. *Lectures:* 21.  
*Educational Conference. Socials.*

*Swindon:*

*Members:* 190.  
*Classes:* 6.  
*Lecture and Social* every Saturday night.  
*Rambles*—Saturday afternoons through Summer.  
*Play Reading Circle.*

*Leicester:* This Branch has the advantage of a home of its own in Vaughan College.

*Members:* 302. *Affiliated Societies:* 44.  
*Classes:* 123 (of which 34 were in centres outside the College, 5 being in the N.F.S.).  
*Students:* 2,493.  
*Lectures:* 9. *Saturday Schools:* 4. *Educational Conferences.*  
*Vaughan Players:* 4 Plays (Shaw, Ibsen, Coward, and Clemence Dane) performed before large audiences.  
*Rambling Club:* Fortnightly rambles.

*The Workers' Educational Trade Union Committee* contains representatives of the Trades Union Congress, Ruskin College, and 34 National Trade Unions, with a membership of three millions, and provides for their members, through the W.E.A., educational facilities ranging from Week-end Schools to Classes and Summer Schools, and Correspondence Courses.

*The Educational Settlements Association* is affiliated to the W.E.A. and has 23 Settlements affiliated to it. Many of the classes held in them are W.E.A. classes. Others are provided by Local Education Authorities, including classes in Languages, Crafts, etc. During the session 1938-9, 194 classes under the A.E.R. were held in Settlements (of which 110 were W.E.A. and University Tutorial Classes), in addition to 235 L.E.A. classes and 294 non-grant-earning courses; with a total of 14,890 students. In 1942-43, 242 Classes of various types were held, together with some 550 informal groups as well as occasional lectures and other activities.

*Local Education Authorities*

The *Regulations for Further Education* enable Local Education Authorities to provide "courses of instruction" with the widest possible latitude.

Some Local Education Authorities provide classes in non-vocational subjects for adults as part of the programme of their Evening Institutes. Some ten or twelve Local Education Authorities also provide for classes organised by voluntary bodies. The majority of Local Education Authorities, including those just mentioned, also make grants in aid to these bodies.

The Board of Education estimated in 1936 that 1,300 classes in social, science, and appreciation subjects, comparable with those under Adult Education Regulations, were provided under the *Regulations for Further Education*, and that one-fifth of these were provided for the W.E.A. These courses are included in the statistics in the W.E.A. Annual Reports.

In addition many classes in practical subjects are provided for adults, especially for such bodies as the Women's Institutes and the Co-operative Women's Guilds.

The Evening Institutes and Colleges in 1937-8 had over a million students, of whom 653,551 (or 55 per cent) were aged 18 and over, including 514,679 over 21.

The subjects studied were classified as follows (but no separate figures are available for the adult students):

	<i>per cent</i>
Industrial, Professional and Commercial ..	25
Domestic Studies .. .. .	13.6
Physical Training .. .. .	11.2
Manual .. .. .	6.7
Mathematics and Science .. .. .	15.7
Art and Music .. .. .	5.8
English .. .. .	11.6
Languages .. .. .	2.7
Social Sciences and Moral Science .. .. .	1.2
Miscellaneous .. .. .	4.5

The development of Adult Education has been carried furthest by the London County Council, which has 12 Literary

## APPENDIX

Institutes, and a number of Men's and Women's Institutes, which are on a more recreational level.<sup>1</sup>

Of the Literary Institutes only one, the City Literary Institute, has a modern building, not used as a school. It had, before the war, some 6,000 students. A typical class programme was as follows:

### *City Literary Institute Programme, 1939-40.*

Total advertised classes: 282.

#### English and Literature:

Art of writing, play writing, and practical criticism	15	
Literature .. .. .	25	
Speech training, dramatic art and public speaking ..	36	
Classical and modern languages and literature ..	74	150
All language and literature courses:		
Music appreciation and practice (including piano) ..	17	
Art and architecture .. .. .	18	35
Physical culture and dancing .. .. .		19
Travel talks .. .. .		6
Sociology, political science, economics and law ..	12	
History and folk-lore .. .. .	12	
Philosophy, logic and psychology .. .. .	19	
Science (including photography and bee keeping) ..	15	58
Courses provided for Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A. ..		14
		282

These Classes were *advertised*. In this particular season, of course, the war intervened. In any case it should not be assumed that every Class would mature, but the programme is probably typical of the work of the Institute.

The other eleven Literary Institutes have similar, but smaller, programmes, carried on mainly in schools.

The L.C.C. also aids the classes provided by other institutions, such as Toynbee Hall and Morley College, as well as those of the W.E.A.

<sup>1</sup> See *Pioneer Work in Adult Education* (H.M.S.O.); and *London Men and Women* (British Institute of Adult Education).



## APPENDIX

The programme of *Morley College* for 1940-41 shows the following courses:

Political Economy and History	7 (includ. 3 Univ. Tut. Cl.)
Literature and Drama	4
Philosophy and Psychology	4 ( " 1 " " " )
Art	2 ( " 1 Practical " )
Science (includ. Photography, Bee Keeping, and Gardening)	6
Languages	21
Music (Practical)	8
Physical Training, Dancing and Fencing	21
Speech Training	2
Public Lectures (courses)	2

There are also various Sports Clubs and Cultural Societies. *Toynbee Hall* (1943-44). Here the syllabus contains:

7 University Tutorial and 4 University Sessional Courses—  
all run in connection with the Toynbee Hall W.E.A. Branch.

First Aid, etc. Classes

9 Speech Training, English and Literature

8 Languages

5 Music (Appreciation and Theory)

13 " (Practical)

4 Drawing and Painting

4 Practical Drama

5 Physical Training, Fencing and Ballet

(Several of these Courses are in preparation for examinations.)

*Mary Ward Settlement*. Adult Education is only a part of the activities of this Settlement, which includes Youth Clubs, a Day Nursery and other social work. In the year 1942-43 the following twelve courses were held:

1 Philosophy

1 Psychology

1 Literature

3 Languages

3 Elocution and Dramatic Art

3 Choral and Instrumental Music

### *Universities*

Every University and University College in England and

Wales has a University Joint Committee, consisting of representatives of the University and the W.E.A., and in some cases of Local Education Authorities. Some Universities have also an Extension Committee. Some Universities have an Extra-Mural Department to co-ordinate the work.

The latest complete statistics are to be found in the report of the Universities Extra-Mural Consultative Committee for 1939-41. The variety of the activities of different Universities is difficult to summarise, and most of the work figures in the Board of Education returns given above; but mention should also be made of the Oxford and Cambridge University Extension Summer Meetings and Vacation Courses for Foreign Students; and of the public lectures, Music and Drama Festivals, Music Recitals, etc., organised by some Universities and University Colleges.

During the war University Extra-Mural Departments have been heavily engaged in the provision of education for H.M. Forces, through the Regional Committees for Adult Education in H.M. Forces.

### *Summer Schools*

Summer Schools were organised before the war by twelve University Joint Committees, and the W.E.A. in Scotland organised a successful Summer School at Newbattle Abbey, although the Scottish Adult Education Regulations make no provision for grant aid to Summer Schools. The number of students attending these fourteen schools which lasted for an aggregate total of 54 weeks in 1939, was 1,640. The students at these schools follow up the studies which they have been carrying on in the winter classes and have the opportunity to make an acquaintance with new fields of study.

There are also the long established University Extension Summer Meetings already mentioned, held in alternative years at Oxford and Cambridge, and attended in pre-war years by hundreds of students.

The Summer School pattern has been adopted by many social and political organisations and many summer schools and holiday courses are held which have no connection with previous systematic study.

*Full-time Study*

Scholarships for full-time study available before the war were summarised in a pamphlet published by the Central Joint Advisory Committee on Tutorial Classes, entitled "The Existing Provision of Scholarships and Bursaries for Adult Students."

Scholarships and Bursaries were offered by Oxford, Cambridge, London and Liverpool Universities, and by the University Colleges of Hull, Leicester, Nottingham and Southampton. Most Universities granted remission of fees where necessary to students awarded scholarships by other Authorities.

A number of scholarships at a University or at Ruskin College were provided by the Central Joint Advisory Committee, which administered Trust grants for residential scholarships, as also did the W.E.A. and the Miners' Welfare Fund.

The Co-operative Union awarded two scholarships to Oxford; one travelling scholarship and ten scholarships at the Co-operative College.

The Educational Settlements Association awarded bursaries annually to non-University Residential Colleges, as did the Bournville Works Council; and occasional awards were made by the Adult School Union.

The Trades Union Congress and certain Trade Unions, and the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society also awarded two scholarships at the Co-operative College.

The residential colleges had in most cases bursary funds for aiding students.

The Mary McArthur Scholarships Fund is for Tutorial Class and other women students wishing to prepare for service to the Trade Union or Labour Movements.

*Residential Colleges*

Six Colleges—Ruskin, Fircroft, Hillcroft, Coleg Harlech, the Catholic Workers' College and Newbattle Abbey—are recognised for grant by the Ministry of Education or the Scottish Education Department; Avoncroft College is aided by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Adult Education Regulations require that instruction of University standard be given, and that a substantial number of students stay for a full year. The course

is, in most cases, for three terms, but may be less. At Ruskin, the majority of students stay a second year, and some of them take a University Diploma in Political Science and Economics. Hillcroft is a women's college; Ruskin is open to both sexes. The total number of students at the five colleges in 1937-38 was 137. In addition the W.E.A. ran annually short residential courses at Holybrook House, Reading.

A number of Local Education Authorities make provision for Adult scholarships at Universities or Residential Colleges—often limiting the number to one or two per annum, and requiring that candidates should be aged between 20 and 40, and should have completed a Tutorial or other adult course.

Residential Colleges *not* aided by the Ministry of Education include:—

*The Co-operative College* at Manchester.

*Woodbrooke*, Selly Oak, Birmingham.

*Ashridge College*, which is associated with the Conservative Party.

#### *Other Educational Agencies*

*The National Central Library*, formerly the Central Library for Students, originally founded to provide books for W.E.A. Classes. Its adult classes department still renders a valuable service in supplementing local provision for such classes.

*The Seafarers' Education Service* provides libraries for crews on the ships of certain lines which subscribe to the service.

*The College of the Sea*, which in 1943 reported a total of 2,298 students in ships at sea who were being advised in their study of 78 subjects by 908 advisors and tutors. The most popular subjects were Mathematics, English and Languages, followed by Psychology, Economics, Art and Science.

*The British Institute of Adult Education*, publishes "*Adult Education*" and other literature dealing with various aspects of the subject: organises Conferences; provides Art Exhibitions, and promotes experiments (e.g. Hospital Education Scheme, etc.).

All these four owe their inception to Dr. Albert Mansbridge, C.H., the Founder of the W.E.A.



*Social Organisations*

There are numerous social organisations which have educational activities, some of them with the aid of teachers (e.g. in handicrafts) from the Local Education Authority, or lecturers from the W.E.A. Their activities comprise such varied subjects as choral and dramatic works, exhibitions, pageants, study circles, etc. Among these may be mentioned the Co-operative Men's and Women's Guilds; the Y.M.C.A. and Y.W.C.A.; the Adult Schools; the churches; the political parties and other propagandist bodies such as the Fabian Society, the National Council of Labour Colleges, etc.

*Co-ordinating and Consultative Bodies in Adult Education*

The following organisations of importance in the Adult Education Movement are not themselves concerned with providing educational service but with various co-ordinating functions.

*Board of Education Adult Education Committee*

This Committee was appointed by the President of the Board for three year periods from July, 1917, onwards. It produced a series of important reports, published as "Papers" No. 1 to 11 of the Adult Education Committee, in which the accumulated experience of the movement is recorded. The latest report of this Committee, which was being drafted shortly before the war, has never appeared, and the future of the Committee is in doubt.

*The Central Joint Advisory Committee on Tutorial Classes*

The C.J.A.C. was formed in 1909 to combine the experience of the Universities and the W.E.A. on the problems common to different Universities in relation to the supply of Tutorial Classes. Its functions have tended to become wider, and it has, with the consent of other interested bodies, approached the Board of Education from time to time on matters of importance to Adult Education generally.

It has been the main channel through which the views of the Universities and the W.E.A. on questions of Adult Education have been communicated to the Board of Education, and

its Annual Reports give a detailed record of the growth of the Tutorial Class and Summer School Movements. It has also administered certain adult scholarships to Universities and Ruskin College.

*The Universities Extra-Mural Consultative Committee*

This Committee was set up in 1926, to enable the University Extra-Mural Boards and Committees to consult on their common interests, particularly in the sphere of University Extension Courses, and its Annual Report gives the only detailed account of these. The Committee consists, in the main, of University Directors of Extra-Mural Studies and similar officers.

*The Association of Tutors in Adult Education* is the medium of negotiations between tutors, responsible bodies and the Ministry of Education. It is represented on the C.J.A.C., the W.E.A. Central E.C., on the Central Council for Education in H.M. Forces, etc.

*Joint Committee for Residential Adult Education*

This Committee, comprising representatives of the Residential Colleges and the voluntary bodies, was suspended soon after the outbreak of war.

*Central Council for Adult Education in H.M. Forces*

The Central Council was established in January, 1940, and consists of some 65 representatives of the Universities, the W.E.A., the Y.M.C.A., the Y.W.C.A., and other bodies, including the Association of Directors and Secretaries of Education, Association of Education Committees, Library Association, T.U.C. Education Committee, Central Committee for Group Listening, Educational Settlements Association, National Adult School Union, Co-operative Union, British Drama League, Salvation Army, Church Army, Toc H, National Union of Teachers, etc.

It administers a grant from the War Office through 23 Regional Committees, and thus co-ordinates the work of the civilian bodies for education in the Forces.

## APPENDIX

*Central Committee for Group Listening* co-ordinates the Listening Groups formed in connection with B.B.C. Talks series, and the Adult Education bodies, the L.E.A.'s, etc., and makes recommendations to the B.B.C. for series of talks.

*The Workers' Educational Association* is a federation of 770 branches, the T.U.C. and 44 national trade unions, the C.W.S., Co-operative Union, and of national co-operative bodies; all the principal teachers' organisations; 24 national social organisations, University and other bodies.



